

January 19, 1998
Janet Jackson thanks firemen by providing...
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Janet Jackson...
First Tamagotchi 'cemetery' opened...
BUDAPEST (AP) — A first 'cemetery'...
Winslet credits co-star DiCaprio...
LOS ANGELES (AP) — Most of the...
Postcard takes 22 years to be...
TOULOUSE (AP) — When Daniel...
Sheridan film to launch Berlinale...
BERLIN (AP) — A Sheridan film...
The film 'The Father'...
The film 'The Father'...
The film 'The Father'...

PNA sentences Hamas bomb-makers to 15 years

JERICHO (AFP) — A Palestinian security court sentenced two members of the Islamist group Hamas to 15 years in prison Monday for making bombs used in two suicide attacks in Jerusalem. After a snap three-hour trial, the court sentenced Nasim Abu Ras and Jasser Samaru to 15 years in prison each, with part of the time served at hard labour, their lawyer Musa Shukumi told journalists. Abu Ras and Samaru, both 24, confessed to charges of "possession and manufacture of explosives," "damaging the vital interests of the Palestinian people," and belonging to Izzedine Al Qassam, Hamas's armed wing, judicial sources said. The West Bank head of Palestinian intelligence, General Tawfiq Al Tirawi, said the two men had manufactured the bombs used in two suicide attacks in Jerusalem on July 30 and Sept. 4 that killed 21 Israelis.

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published by the Jordan Press Foundation
جوردان تايمز يومية سياسية تصدر بالانكليزية عن المؤسسة الصحفية الاردنية 'الراي'

Volume 23 Number 6743 AMMAN TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1998, RAMADAN 22, 1418 Price: Jordan 200 fils

1998 budget clears House after marathon debate

By Fairouz Abu-Ghazaleh
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — After a tough five-day debate, the draft 1998 state budget cleared the Lower House of Parliament on Monday with a sizeable majority. In a surprise turnover, 59 of 74 deputies present in yesterday's session voted in favour of the JD 1.95 billion budget that projects a JD37 million deficit, giving Dr. Majali's government the green light to continue tough economic reforms needed to overhaul the economy. Before the government starts disbursing this year's allocations, the budget will also have to be endorsed by the Upper House (Senate), which will start debating it today. Responding to speeches made by 69 deputies during

ing a marathon debate that started on Jan. 11, Dr. Majali stressed that the government would not tolerate random criticism and accusations against it unless they were substantiated with facts and figures. But Dr. Majali used a good part of his speech to dismiss allegations of corruption made last week by Deputy Ahmad Oweidi Abbadi. "The government consists of ministers who have proven their capabilities and allegiance in every place and position, and I am proud of them and their achievements," Dr. Majali said. "I do not accept any unjustified attacks on these ministers, who have won His Majesty King Hussein's confidence and the House's confidence." (see full story on page 3).

Dr. Majali's government won the House's vote of confidence on Dec. 15, after 51 deputies voted in favour of the 24-member cabinet. The Prime Minister said controversial International Monetary Fund (IMF)-agreed economic reforms, launched in 1989 after a severe financial crisis, will end this year. But, told the House, economic reforms will continue through a national five-year programme ending in the year 2002. Dr. Majali defended the programme, which he said helped the Kingdom reschedule its foreign debt of JD4,700b (as of Oct. 31, 1997) and trim budget and balance of payment deficits and said that it was too early to pass judgements on the programme. "Some deputies discussed the economic

restructuring programme without due information and sufficient knowledge," Dr. Majali said. He said deputies exaggerated Jordan's economic woes by claiming the Kingdom was suffering from deep economic recession and government inefficiency. He said that although our economic situation is not what Jordanians wished it to be and that although "unemployment and poverty worry us all, we refuse to use the terms recession and regression" to describe the country's economic stand because statistics available to the government and those provided to it by Arab and international institutions reaffirm that the country's economic structure is sound and that its economic policies are headed in

the right direction. Dr. Majali said unemployment, estimated by independent research institutions at 22 to 27 per cent of the workforce, did not exceed 15 per cent. "In their speeches, some deputies expressed pessimistic views about the situation in this country," Dr. Majali said. "Allow me to remind you of God's blessings represented in the country's tolerant leadership, the country's infrastructure, educational and health services, growing agricultural production, in addition to our progress in housing, electricity, water, factories and various other fields." He also defended a multi-million-dollar social security network programme.



Lawmakers vote to approve the fiscal budget for 1998 on Monday, with 59-15 votes in the 80-member Lower House (photo by Youssef 'Allan')

(Continued on page 7)

Team of senior officials formed to investigate Rabia slayings Iraqi diplomat arrived at crime scene after murder of others — only survivor

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — A five-man team of senior security officers was formed to investigate the murder of six Iraqis in Amman on Saturday night, including Iraq's deputy chief of mission, Hikmat Abdul Razaq Al Hajo, and his wife, security officials said Sunday. The team, headed by Amman's police chief, Brigadier Hisham Nsour, includes representatives of different security departments, including the General Intelligence Department, the officials told the Jordan Times.

Iraq's Public Security Department Chief Tahir Al Haboushi was expected here on Monday to follow up on the results of the investigations. Iraq's foreign ministry's under secretary, Sa'ad Al Faisal, who arrived on Monday, met with Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali at the residence of the Iraqi Ambassador in Amman Nouri Al Weiss. "Dr. Majali's 20-minute visit to the Iraqi ambassador's residence was only to offer condolences for the death of the Iraqis," a government official told the Jordan Times.

The official said that Dr. Majali was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister for Services Affairs Abdullah Ensour. Dr. Majali rejected suggestions that the attack against the Iraqis was in retaliation for the executions of four Jordanians in Baghdad on Dec. 8 for smuggling car spare parts. "It's not linked to that, at least until now and we do not expect it to be. I think it's a separate incident," Dr. Majali was quoted as saying by local newspapers.

The premier also rejected "foreign participation" in the investigation saying that "it is unacceptable. Sovereignty rules that the state runs all its affairs. We will keep our brother country informed of all developments." A judicial official, who asked not to be named, told the Jordan Times that investigators have interrogated Ms. Diodisios following her recovery from the surgery she underwent after receiving at least five stabs in her chest and abdomen. Ms. Lidaki told investigators that Hajo and his wife were not killed until after the slaughter of the other six people. "Hikmat Hajo arrived at the scene after the murder of the six people by five Iraqis who were preparing to flee. They then stabbed him," Ms. Lidaki was quoted by Agence France Presse as telling investigators, Monday.

of Iraq endured and I stress again, the people of Iraq, the children, the people who are denied medicine and food," the King said. "But not necessarily another group of people, who are in control of the country and have been so far. I do not think we have heard that their children... have suffered anywhere as much as we see in photographs and reports we see from time-to-time," he added. "So it is really the concern for the people of Iraq for their future, for their humanity. It is a country so rich. Such a past. How long can it endure? And to what end I have no answer. I really do not know," said the King. King Hussein said: "But I really pray to God that Iraq will be finally liberated from all causes, all reasons that cause the people of Iraq to suffer the way they have so far."

They added that the government has announced a reward for any person who submits information about the masked men who stabbed to death six Iraqis, two Egyptians and one Greek female, Anastasia Diodisios Lidaki, the only survivor of the bloody attack. Two Iraqi millionaires, Sami George, the owner of the villa where the attack took place, and Namir Ochi were among the victims of the attack.

The official said that Dr. Majali was accompanied by Deputy Prime Minister for Services Affairs Abdullah Ensour. Dr. Majali rejected suggestions that the attack against the Iraqis was in retaliation for the executions of four Jordanians in Baghdad on Dec. 8 for smuggling car spare parts. "It's not linked to that, at least until now and we do not expect it to be. I think it's a separate incident," Dr. Majali was quoted as saying by local newspapers.

The premier also rejected "foreign participation" in the investigation saying that "it is unacceptable. Sovereignty rules that the state runs all its affairs. We will keep our brother country informed of all developments." A judicial official, who asked not to be named, told the Jordan Times that investigators have interrogated Ms. Diodisios following her recovery from the surgery she underwent after receiving at least five stabs in her chest and abdomen. Ms. Lidaki told investigators that Hajo and his wife were not killed until after the slaughter of the other six people. "Hikmat Hajo arrived at the scene after the murder of the six people by five Iraqis who were preparing to flee. They then stabbed him," Ms. Lidaki was quoted by Agence France Presse as telling investigators, Monday.

of Iraq endured and I stress again, the people of Iraq, the children, the people who are denied medicine and food," the King said. "But not necessarily another group of people, who are in control of the country and have been so far. I do not think we have heard that their children... have suffered anywhere as much as we see in photographs and reports we see from time-to-time," he added. "So it is really the concern for the people of Iraq for their future, for their humanity. It is a country so rich. Such a past. How long can it endure? And to what end I have no answer. I really do not know," said the King. King Hussein said: "But I really pray to God that Iraq will be finally liberated from all causes, all reasons that cause the people of Iraq to suffer the way they have so far."

of Iraq endured and I stress again, the people of Iraq, the children, the people who are denied medicine and food," the King said. "But not necessarily another group of people, who are in control of the country and have been so far. I do not think we have heard that their children... have suffered anywhere as much as we see in photographs and reports we see from time-to-time," he added. "So it is really the concern for the people of Iraq for their future, for their humanity. It is a country so rich. Such a past. How long can it endure? And to what end I have no answer. I really do not know," said the King. King Hussein said: "But I really pray to God that Iraq will be finally liberated from all causes, all reasons that cause the people of Iraq to suffer the way they have so far."

Majali welcomes Iraq's pardon of Jordanian prisoners, says Kingdom is yet to be officially informed

By Tareq Ayyoub
Special to the Jordan Times

AMMAN — Prime Minister Abdul Salam Majali on Monday welcomed an Iraqi announcement to release all Jordanian prisoners in Iraq but said that the government is yet to receive official notification on the release. Iraqi President Saddam Hussein announced Sunday that Baghdad will free all Jordanian detainees following a meeting with Jordan's Engineers Association President Leith Shbeilat. "President Saddam Hussein decided that all Jordanian prisoners be freed immediately... whatever their sentences are," the Iraqi News Agency (INA) reported from Baghdad on Sunday. The agency added that

President Hussein ordered a "halt to all legal proceedings against all Jordanians." Although he welcomed the decision, Dr. Majali said that announcing the news through the press is not the proper way to notify Jordan. "The mass media has reported to us the news to release all Jordanian prisoners. We are happy about this decision and it is highly appreciated," Dr. Majali said. But he added that "we wish if Iraqi authorities had informed us through the proper channels about this decision and not through a press statement," Dr. Majali told Parliament. "Neither the government nor the Jordanian embassy [in Baghdad] has received any memo regarding this."

the premier told lawmakers during the House's annual debate on the state budget. Dr. Majali said that during the Islamic conference in Tehran in November, His Royal Highness Crown Prince Hassan met with Iraqi Vice President Taha Yassin Ramadan to discuss the release of prisoners. During the meeting, the Crown Prince "informed the Iraqi leadership of His Majesty's insistence to release all Jordanian detainees and bring them safely back to Jordan," Dr. Majali said. "This was followed by a visit by the Iraqi interior minister," the prime minister said that the Iraqi interior minister, Mohammad Abdul

Special Commission (UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq asked if the timing was from last Saturday or started on Nov. 20, as had initially been proposed by the Iraqi parliament. The UNSCOM chief, who arrived earlier the same day for a 24-hour visit, also said he was seeking a formula to allow full access for the weapons inspectors while respecting Iraqi concerns over its sovereignty at presidential sites. In the row over presidential sites which Baghdad has declared off-limits in defiance of the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Butler tried to adopt a conciliatory stand. "We should find ways to show respect for Iraq's sovereignty, dignity and national security," he said. "But it cannot be to the derogation of the principle of complete access." Mr. Butler said he had no "illusions about the seriousness of this moment. I earnestly hope that we and the Iraqi side can come to terms with the Security

Combined agency dispatches
ISRAELI PRIME Minister Benjamin Netanyahu's talks with U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington Tuesday will be "the last chance for the government to advance the peace" process, 115 Israeli reserve officers, including eleven generals, warned. "We call on the prime minister to continue on the path of peace outlined by Yitzhak Rabin [the prime minister assassinated in November 1995] and to carry out the Israeli army withdrawal from the West Bank stipulated in the accords," the officers said in an open letter to Mr. Netanyahu on Monday. Signatories included General Tvi Tzur, chief of staff from 1961 to 1964, and the former Israeli police chief, Youssef Nahmias. The text of the letter is identical to one 350 officers sent to then Prime Minister Menachem Begin

Israeli generals urge Netanyahu to seize 'last chance' for peace

Most Israelis favour compromise — poll

Clinton mulling own plan for Israeli troop withdrawal — press

Combined agency dispatches
U.S. PRESIDENT Bill Clinton and his foreign policy advisors met here Monday to discuss this week's meetings with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat, the White House said. Mr. Clinton met for 45 minutes with officials including Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, National Security Advisor Sandy Berger, Mideast envoy Dennis Ross and Undersecretary of State Martin Indyk, a former ambassador to Israel, White House spokesman Barry Toiv said. He declined to comment on an Israeli news report that Mr. Clinton was pro-

pose to the two leaders that Israel withdraw from 12 per cent of the West Bank territory it holds in three stages. "The president's goal this week is to help sharpen the issues that the parties need to face between themselves," said Mr. Toiv. "This is the appropriate way to do this visit." Contrary to custom, the Israeli leader will not dine with Mr. Clinton, nor will the two men host a joint press conference, signs viewed in Washington as indicating Mr. Clinton's growing irritation with Mr. Netanyahu's perceived inflexibility. The Haaretz newspaper reported Monday that Mr. Clinton is mulling a

Combined agency dispatches
Clinton mulling own plan for Israeli troop withdrawal — press



His Majesty King Hussein talks to a delegation of Swiss equestrian journalists, Monday. Her Majesty Queen Noor, and Her Royal Highness Princess Haya attended the meeting (photo by Youssef 'Allan')

"What we need is to see is a strict adherence to agreements and strict implementation of agreements so that there is credibility given to the whole process which has been moving too slow and the minority of extremists here and there have dictated their agenda, the agenda of fear, and suspicion which might be aimed at driving the Israelis into a fortress, and creating a fortress mentality. This would be disastrous," the King said. "I believe the overwhelming majority of people here and there yearn for peace. Peace that comes from understanding each other's problems, peace which is just, peace which is lasting. You only need to look from west of Amman to see Jerusalem and how close we are."

Stressing his determination to remove the elements of fear and instability in the region, King Hussein said that he was worried about a future without a permanent and just peace. He called on all the parties to the peace process to remain committed to the accords that they have reached in the past few years so that extremists would not impose their own agenda on the region.

(Continued on page 3)

Butler opens crisis talks in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AFP) — U.N. disarmament envoy Richard Butler opened crisis talks with Iraqi Deputy Prime Minister Tariq Aziz here Monday after dismissing an Iraqi threat to impose a time limit on the work of weapons inspectors. The talks were being held at the Iraqi Foreign Ministry, the official news agency INA said. Oil Minister General Amar Mohammad Al Rashid was in the Iraqi delegation. "This [disarmament] work can be done quite quickly with full Iraqi cooperation. It will end when it ends," Mr. Butler told a press conference ahead of the meeting. But to set a six-month deadline, as President Saddam Hussein threatened last Saturday unless U.N. economic sanctions are lifted, would show "a degree of arbitrariness that makes no practical sense," he said. Mr. Butler said he would seek clarification from Mr. Aziz. "I will ask them to explain this to me: I don't know when the clock starts ticking," he said. The chairman of the U.N. Special Commission

(UNSCOM) in charge of dismantling Iraq asked if the timing was from last Saturday or started on Nov. 20, as had initially been proposed by the Iraqi parliament. The UNSCOM chief, who arrived earlier the same day for a 24-hour visit, also said he was seeking a formula to allow full access for the weapons inspectors while respecting Iraqi concerns over its sovereignty at presidential sites. In the row over presidential sites which Baghdad has declared off-limits in defiance of the U.N. Security Council, Mr. Butler tried to adopt a conciliatory stand. "We should find ways to show respect for Iraq's sovereignty, dignity and national security," he said. "But it cannot be to the derogation of the principle of complete access." Mr. Butler said he had no "illusions about the seriousness of this moment. I earnestly hope that we and the Iraqi side can come to terms with the Security

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued on page 7)

(Continued on page 3)

(Continued on page 7)

Hamas leader warns of more anti-Israel attacks in 1998

ABU DHABI (AFP) — The founder of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) called Monday for a halt of the negotiations with Israel and warned of more attacks against the Jewish state this year.

Sheikh Ahmad Yassin said the establishment of a Palestinian state on the West Bank and Gaza Strip would only be a temporary solution.

"1997 was a bad year for the Palestinian people but it was also a year of defiance against the Israeli occupation and the American pressure," the sheikh told the United Arab Emirates weekly Al Sharq.

"The resistance will continue until we achieve victory...our hope is that 1998 will be a year of more sacrifices and more martyrs to force the usurping and occupying enemy to end its aggression against our people."

Sheikh Yassin, spiritual leader of the Hamas, renewed criticism of the landmark peace deal between Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinians in Oslo 1993, saying it only "legalised Israel's presence on our land and recognised what it has usurped

Hamas activists complain of prison conditions

NABLUS (AP) — Imprisoned members of the Islamic Resistance Movement (Hamas) say their living conditions have become "unbearable" since the discovery of a Hamas bomb factory last week.

Forty-one prisoners held in Jneid Prison in Nablus sent a letter to President Yasser Arafat, president of the Palestinian National Authority (PNA). A copy of the letter was distributed to the press Sunday.

Since the discovery of more than 700 kilograms of explosives at a bomb factory in Nablus last Monday, the letter said, 15 of the Hamas prisoners have been placed in solitary

confinement in small underground cells, while the rest have had most privileges revoked, such as outdoor exercise breaks, radios, and television sets. Pictures of family members were taken away, and security measures surrounding family visits were tightened, the prisoners said.

The prisoners said their leader, Jamal Mansour, had been transferred to Jericho prison for interrogation.

The 41 were detained five months ago, after Hamas claimed responsibility for two suicide bombings in Jerusalem that killed 26 Israelis. None of the prisoners have been charged.

of our territory."

"So, we do not see any use of participating in any negotiations with the Israeli enemy. We even advise our brothers in the Palestine Liberation Organisation to stop such negotiations, which are a mere waste of time."

Sheikh Yassin's comments came a day before Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu is due to meet U.S. President Bill Clinton in Washington for talks on the deadlocked Middle East peace

process. Mr. Clinton will also meet Palestinian President Yasser Arafat on Thursday.

The talks will focus on Israel's plans to redeploy its troops in the West Bank as part of the final phase of the autonomy accord. Israel has vowed to keep much of the West Bank, including occupied Arab east Jerusalem, drawing anger from the Palestinian National Authority (PNA) in the self-rule areas.

"If we accept the West Bank and Gaza Strip, we accept them as a stage in the history of the Palestinian people and we will stop fighting as a ceasefire in a battle rather than a total peace," Sheikh Yassin said, in an apparent reference to the state of Israel.

"We will then leave the future for history and the generations to come. We are not planning to bereave the coming generations by compromising on our rights to the enemy...our rights will be recovered by our hands and theirs."



FUNERAL FOR THE CHILDREN: A funeral procession for some 70 children Iraq says died through a lack of medicine caused by United Nations sanctions tours central Baghdad surrounded by watching crowds Sunday. The coffins, wrapped in white linen and bearing pictures of the dead children with their names and ages, were carried on top of taxis (Reuters photo)

Syria attacks 'patient' attitude of U.S. in peace process

DAMASCUS (AFP) — Syria on Monday attacked the "patient" attitude of the United States towards Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu as ineffectual for unblocking the deadlocked Middle East peace process.

"We have to question Wash-

ington's credibility in the peace process when [even] the American administration has pessimistic expectations of Israel, which is sabotaging peace," wrote Al Baath, the official daily of Syria's ruling Baath Party.

"This patient attitude is no

more than a useful policy in the face of an extremist government which is working daily to kill the peace process," it said.

The paper said also said Mr. Netanyahu, en route to Washington to meet U.S. President Bill Clinton on Tuesday, "is

carrying political and military tension in his bags."

"Everyone predicts the failure of the negotiations at the White House unless the American president goes on the attack to forbid Netanyahu from pursuing his adventurist policy," the paper said.

Lebanese freed after 13 years in Israeli prison

TYRE (AFP) — A Lebanese man who had been detained in jail for 13 years in Israel was freed on Monday, Lebanese police said.

Abdul Karim Mohammad Abdul Latif Ali, 28, was handed over to the International Committee for the Red Cross at the Lebanese-Israeli border and taken to Lebanese army headquarters in the southern port city of Tyre, they said.

At the age of 15, Ali was sentenced by Israel to 15 years in jail for taking part in an anti-Israeli attack, but he was released two years early.

About 200 Lebanese are detained, mostly without trial

or charge and often for several years, in Khyam prison in the Israeli-occupied border zone in southern Lebanon and other prisons inside Israel.

Human rights groups have repeatedly denounced cases of torture and ill-treatment of Lebanese detainees in Israeli jails. Under the Geneva Convention, the arrest of Lebanese people in Lebanon and their subsequent detention in Israel is prohibited.

According to Israeli prison officials, there are at least 10 Lebanese held in jails inside Israel who have completed their sentences, but are still imprisoned.

Bail refused for Israeli accused of selling arms to Iran

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel's supreme court refused on Monday to order the release on bail of a businessman on trial for allegedly selling chemical weapons technology to Iran.

The court rejected an appeal from the businessman, Nahum Manbar, against his continued detention pending the outcome of his trial.

Manbar, 51, is accused of assisting an enemy at war with Israel and passing information to the enemy with the intention of harming state security.

Prosecutors allege that Mr. Manbar received \$16 million

from Iran for providing materials to produce mustard and nerve gas between 1990 and 1994.

Mr. Manbar, whose closed-door trial began on June 9, has denied the charges against him, claiming that Israeli authorities were fully aware of all his dealings with Iran.

Mr. Manbar also faces charges of obstruction of justice and violating a ban on publication of details of his case. He faces up to life in prison.

Mr. Manbar was arrested on Mar. 27 when he flew into Israel from Europe, where he has lived since 1985.

Egyptian Islamists call for uprising in Turkey

CAIRO (AFP) — Egyptian Islamists called Monday for Islamists in Turkey to take up arms after Turkish courts ordered their Islamist Welfare Party dissolved.

"Every experience shows that holy war is the only way to wipe out apostasy," or the renunciation of faith, Jihad Tala'eh Al Fatah (Vanguards of Conquest) said in a statement.

"Many naive Muslims unfortunately believed that democracy could get them somewhere. Now the examples of Algeria, Egypt, Yemen and finally Turkey show that this is only an illusion," the

statement said. "Once again, the military has dissolved Welfare because it is against secular trends even though its leader, Necmettin Erbakan, agreed to place a flower on the tomb of the dictator Ataturk," it said.

Mustafa Kemal Ataturk, who founded modern Turkey, made the predominantly Muslim country a secular state.

Jihad Tala'eh Al Fatah called on "Muslims in Turkey to change their approach and draw conclusions from past errors."

"If death is our destiny, it is better to fall with our heads high than to die on our knees,"

said the group, a branch of the Jihad organisation that assassinated former Egyptian President Anwar Sadat.

Jihad Tala'eh Al Fatah is the second largest Islamist group in Egypt after Gamaa Islamiya.

In Syria, the country's highest Muslim official, the mufti, Ahmed Kaftaro, said in a message to Mr. Erbakan that he regretted the dissolution order.

"We regret the decision...and we were saddened by the state of democracy in Turkey," the sheikh said.

The Iraqi opposition party Ad Daawa said in a statement issued in Damascus that "the

provocative decision by the secular Turkish government has destroyed the hopes of the Turkish people for resuming their role among the Muslim nations."

"But dissolving Welfare and the ban on Erbakan from politics for five years will not halt the Islamist party's expansion," Ad Daawa added.

Welfare was dissolved Friday for attempting to overthrow Turkey's secular regime.

It was the largest party in the Turkish parliament, with 150 seats out of 550, and Mr. Erbakan was prime minister from June 1996 to June 1997.

Rebel defections reported in Sudan's West Kordofan

KHARTOUM (AFP) — West Kordofan Governor Bashir Adam Rahma has announced that 1,578 rebel fighters, including 16 officers, have defected to Sudanese government ranks in his state.

The rebels came from the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA), the main anti-government force, which has

been fighting since 1983 to end domination of the mainly animist and Christian south by the Arabised, Islamist north.

In reports published here Monday, Mr. Rahma said the defectors had arrived at Abi town, which has now been cleared of rebel activities.

SPLA activities in the Kordofan region were said to be

confined mainly to the Nuba mountains and carried out principally by native Nuba tribesmen.

The governor said his state government was also negotiating peace with indigenous Temah and Telche tribesmen who apparently supported the rebel movement.

Anti-government activities continued in the Nuba moun-

tains despite the fact that a group of Nuba rebels, led by Mohammad Haroun Kafe, had split from the SPLA and concluded a peace agreement with Khartoum last April.

Some Nuba tribesmen were also fighting alongside the SPLA in south Sudan. A Nubian, Yousef Kuwah, is a senior aide to SPLA Chief John Garang.

Two years on, Palestinian council marginalised by Arafat

RAMALLAH (AFP) — Despite a year which saw open clashes with Palestinian President Yasser Arafat over corruption, the Palestinian Legislative Council marks its second anniversary still largely marginalised in its fight for democracy in the self-rule authority.

"The problem is Arafat. He is not used to having another power which can question him or his decisions. He rules things like a tribe, not like a government," said council member Hatem Abdul Qader.

"The council has been unable to achieve half of what it should due to the obstacles which the authority puts in its way. We don't have rule by law, we have rule by personalities and by haphazard decisions," he told AFP.

When the 88-member council, based in the West Bank town of Ramallah, was created in historic elec-

tions on Jan. 20, 1996, hopes were high it would represent a democratic balance of powers in Mr. Arafat's Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

But in the two years since, Mr. Arafat has only signed one of the council's many bills into law — and that only last month after an uproar in the council — and many council members have complained that he is ignoring the body.

That seemed on the way to change in August when the council led its most overt clash ever with Mr. Arafat, issuing a damning report of widespread corruption in the badly-organised self-rule ministries and fingering three ministers as directly involved in corruption.

The council made an unprecedented demand that Mr. Arafat replace his entire cabinet and, in response, 16 of his 22 ministers submitted their res-

ignation. But more than five months later, the ministers remain in place and a much-promised reform to purge corruption has not occurred.

When the council threatened in December to hold a vote of no confidence in Mr. Arafat's government, he was forced to respond, but he kept the council at bay with backroom meetings and vague promises to conduct a cabinet reshuffle soon.

He also signed into law for the first time a bill passed by the council — a law on local councils — and promised other bills would follow.

But he has yet to approve a basic law passed by the council which would serve as a constitution for the PNA, out of fear of the limitations it would put on his powers, many council members say.

In October, one of the council's most renowned

members, Haidar Abdul Shafi, resigned in protest, accusing Mr. Arafat of ignoring the legislature.

"The council has been left absent from the political process, its opinions are not considered," Mr. Abdul Shafi, 78, said in announcing his resignation. Council member Ahmad Al Dik insisted the council had "proved its place as a legislative body and it plays a positive role."

"Certainly we cannot say it has succeeded totally. But the extent of understanding by the authority is much greater than before. This is a learning process. Each side has to learn to deal with the other," he said.

"There are also obstacles from the outside," he said, pointing to the 10-month deadlock in the peace process with Israel which overshadowed internal reform in the authority.

"The priority is the political front and the peace

process. If that improves, the internal front will also improve," he said.

But Mr. Abdul Qader admitted the council had "backed down" in the cabinet crisis but said a bloc of council members from Mr. Arafat's own Fatah faction of the Palestine Liberation Organisation could spark another clash with the self-rule leader if he did not start reform.

"We have not used all our cards yet. If we are forced to, we will turn to the people, expose all the corruption and misadministration and have the people decide," he said. "Arafat has made a lot of promises and all we can do is wait. I personally don't believe they will happen," he said.

"The actual cabinet reshuffle is not the problem. Changing the people doesn't matter, we need to change the entire style of governing," he said.

JORDAN TELEVISION

Tel. 773111-19

PROGRAMME TWO

14:10 Sandokan
14:30 French Programmes
16:15 Prayers
16:30 Believe and Behave
17:00 Skippy
17:30 Square One TV
18:00 Gillette Sports
18:30 News Headlines
18:35 A Whole New Ballgame
19:00 News in French
19:15 Ramadan Talks
19:35 Black Hat Chef
20:00 What Would You Do?
20:30 Encounter
21:10 Hollywood Remembers
22:00 News in English
22:30 Marguerite Volant
23:15 Feature film: 'The First Season'
23:59 Islam in a Changing World

PRAYER TIMES

05:10 Fajr
06:31 (Sunrise) Duha
11:46 Dhuhur
14:38 'Asr
17:02 Maghreb
18:23 Isha

CHURCHES

St. Mary of Nazareth Church
Sweiffah. Tel. 810740

Assemblies of God Church

Tel. 632785.

St. Joseph Church Tel. 624590

Church of the Annunciation
Tel. 637440.

De la Salle Church Tel.
661757.

Terra Sancta Church Tel.
622366

Anglican Church Tel. 652826.

Armenian Catholic Church
Tel. 771331.

Armenian Orthodox Church
Tel. 775261.

St. Ephraim Church Tel.
771751.

Amman International Church
Tel. 865897

Evangelical Lutheran Church
Tel. 824328.

German-speaking Evangelical
Congregation Tel. 845457

The Latter-Day Saints Tel.
654932.

Church of Nazareth Tel.
675691.

The Evangelical Local Church
in Amman Tel. 811295

English-speaking
Latin Catholics Parish Tel.
614190.

JORDAN TIMES DAILY GUIDE AND CALENDAR

WEATHER

Bulletin supplied by the Department of Meteorology

Skies will be cloudy to partly cloudy with a chance of scattered showers and winds south-westerly moderate. In Aqaba, winds will be southerly moderate and seas calm.

Amman 05/12

Aqaba 09/20

Deserts 03/13

Jordan Valley 10/19

Yesterday's high temperatures:
Amman 13, Aqaba 22 Humidity readings: Amman 60 per cent, Aqaba 34 per cent.

USEFUL TELEPHONE NUMBERS

NIGHT DUTY
AMMAN:
Dr. Mukhlis Halaseh 5519220
Dr. Rami Sukkar 856457
Dr. Fadi Al Khatib 865456
Dr. Yousef Al Faqih 780104
Ferdows pharmacy 778336
Al Asema pharmacy 637055

Al Salam pharmacy

..... 636730

Yacoub pharmacy 644945

Shmeisani pharmacy 637660

Nairoukh pharmacy 623672

IRBID:
Dr. Ahmad Qanu 281484

Al Quds pharmacy 623672

ZARQA:
Dr. Fahd Jabri 984549

Khalifeh pharmacy 985417

EMERGENCIES

Food Control Centre 637111

Civil Defence Dept 661111

Civil Defence Immediate Rescues 630341

Civil Defence Emergency 199

Rescue Police 192, 621111, 637777

Fire Brigade 617101

Blood Bank 775121

Highway Police 843402

Traffic Police 896390

Public Security Department 630321

Hotel Complaints 603800

Price Complaints 661176

Water and Sewerage Complaints 897467

Amman Municipality Complaints 787111

Telephone Information (directory assistance)

..... 121

Overseas Calls 010230

Central Amman Telephone Repairs 623101

Abdali Telephone Repairs 661101

Jordan Television 773111

Radio Jordan 774111

Water Authority 680100

Jordan Electricity Authority 815615

Electric Power Company 636381

RJ Flight Information 0853200

Queen Alia Int. Airport 08-53200

HOSPITALS

AMMAN:
Hussein Medical Centre
813813/2

Khalidi Maternity 644281/6

Akileh Maternity 64241/2

Jahal Amman Maternity 642362

Malhas, J. Amman 636140

Palestine, Shmeisani 607071

Shmeisani Hospital 669131

University Hospital 845845

Al-Muasher Hospital 667227/9

The Islamic, Abdali

666126/37

Al-Ahli, Abdali 664164/6

Italian, Al-Muhajreen 777101/3

Al-Bashir 775111/26

Army, Marka 891611/15

Queen Alla Hospital
602240/50

Amal Hospital 674155

The Arab Centre for Heart and Special Surgery 865199

ZARQA:
Zarqa Govt. Hospital (09) 983323

Zarqa National Hospital
..... (09) 900560

Ibn Sina Hospital (09) 986732

Al Hikma Modern Hospital
..... (09) 990990

IRBID:
Princess Basma Hospital
..... (02) 275555

Greek Catholic Hospital
..... (02) 272275

Ibn Al Nafees Hospital
..... (02) 347100

FOR THE TRAVELLER
QUEEN ALIA
AIRPORT

ARRIVALS

Royal Jordanian (RJ) Flights
07:15 Sanaa (RJ)

07:25 Damascus (RJ)

09:00 Jeddah (add) (RJ)

09:25 Abu Dhabi (RJ)

Chinese military told to accept U.S. Asia role

BEIJING (AFP) — U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen told China's military Monday it could work with Washington or against it, but that either way the United States would prevail as an Asian power.

Mr. Cohen called this "a fundamental choice" for Beijing, in a speech to military officers here at the Academy of Military Science.

"We can work together toward our common interest, or we can work against each other," he said. "The United States will succeed on either path."

However, Mr. Cohen's meetings here with China's top military leaders appeared to have set the stage for expanding military ties.

He and Chinese Defence Minister Chi Haotian signed a Maritime Military Consultative Agreement that seeks to avert unintended conflicts at sea by opening regular channels of communication between the U.S. and Chinese militaries.

The agreement is the first of its kind between the U.S. and Chinese military.

Mr. Chi offered Mr. Cohen fresh assurances that China would not supply anti-ship cruise missiles to Iran.

And in a spirit of open-

ness, the Chinese military gave Mr. Cohen and a small delegation of Americans an unprecedented tour of the Beijing Air Defence Command Centre, which controls the surface-to-air missiles that defend Beijing from air attack.

Mr. Cohen made clear that Washington and its allies in the region want an open and cooperative relationship with the Peoples Liberation Army, as it transforms itself into a modern military power.

He called for more exchanges of military officers in areas such as strategic nuclear missiles, defence environmental matters, and affairs involving prisoners of war and service members missing in action.

But he also warned China against selling arms to Iran, and said it needed to do more to win the confidence of Washington.

"Today, China is an Asian power, and rightfully so," he said in the speech. "The United States does not fear this, nor do we view China as an adversary."

"Rather, the U.S. seeks to encourage China to step forward as a responsible and cooperative great nation — a nation that preserves its unique identity, but is more open on security matters and more respectful of the rule of

law."

Responding to past Chinese criticism of the U.S. military presence in Asia, Mr. Cohen defended it as "an anchor of stability in the midst of the storm" and said no country had benefited more from the U.S. security umbrella than China.

U.S. alliances with Japan, South Korea, Australia, Thailand and the Philippines are "the first pillar of our security strategy in the region," he said.

"The U.S.-Japan security alliance, for example, will be as important to Asia's future as it has been to its past," he said.

Despite recent rancour over Taiwan and a history of mistrust over each other's intentions, Mr. Cohen and Mr. Chi toasted each other with champagne.

Mr. Chi said the military maritime agreement "marks a new and substantial progress between our two countries and our two militaries."

"It is also a specific expression of the positive efforts the Chinese and American sides have made for the maintenance of peace and stability," he said. Under the agreement, U.S. and Chinese delegations led by a general or admiral will meet once a year to discuss issues such as maritime safety mea-

sures, communications procedures for U.S. and Chinese warships, search and rescue operations, and common maritime "rules of the road."

The accord also foresees working groups and special meetings on naval issues.

With China developing a "blue water" navy capable of operating throughout the Pacific, U.S. military analysts anticipate a greater potential for incidents at sea in contacts with U.S. warships.

"As our naval and air forces have more contact, this agreement will increase understanding and reduce chances of miscalculation," Mr. Cohen said. "The agreement demonstrates the maturing relationship between our militaries."

In a spirit of openness, the Chinese military took Mr. Cohen and a small group of U.S. officials on a tour of Beijing's Air Defence Command Centre, which controls the belt of surface-to-air missiles that defend the Chinese capital against air attack.

The facility was so secret that the Chinese did not even acknowledge its existence until a week ago, a U.S. military official said. Reporters were barred from the tour, which was limited to the first 15 Americans ever to visit the complex.



Russian President Boris Yeltsin (left) smiles during a ceremony to receive the credentials of new ambassadors, as U.S. Ambassador James Collins looks on (Reuters photo)

Yeltsin returns to Kremlin, attacks persistent wage arrears

MOSCOW (AFP) — President Boris Yeltsin arrived back at the Kremlin Monday after a two-week holiday and clashed with his premier as he took the government to task for failing to clear massive public sector wage arrears.

Mr. Yeltsin, who resumed work briefly last month after a two-week illness, told Prime Minister Viktor Chernomyrdin his social policy had "failed," saying state workers were still waiting for back pay.

But Mr. Chernomyrdin, who has emerged from months of political manoeuvring with his authority enhanced, defended the cabinet, saying the government had paid out the funds by the Jan. 1 deadline imposed by Mr. Yeltsin.

The clash came during a meeting with Mr. Chernomyrdin and his two first deputy prime ministers, Boris Nemtsov and Anatoly Chubais, the leading pro-market reformers in the cabinet charged with meeting the wages deadline.

"You have failed to meet our obligations," Mr. Yeltsin said. "Work has built up, and a whole number of problems have been created," he said in comments broadcast on

NTV television. However, the premier shot back: "What do you mean Boris Nikolaevich? We paid out according to our obligations, and even 3,000 billion (old) rubles (\$500 million) extra for the payment of debts. We have paid off everything."

"This is not so, but you have indeed helped federal subjects more than it was expected," the president replied.

Mr. Yeltsin himself announced the debts had been cleared a day ahead of schedule on Dec. 30. But several television reports this month have said that state workers in the provinces are still waiting for up to six months of back pay.

Late salary payments have been one of the main social problems in Russia over the past two years.

Mr. Yeltsin appeared tired and spoke with a subdued voice during the televised exchange.

Although the president often criticises his ministers in public, it is unusual for Mr. Chernomyrdin to flatly contradict the president in public.

Mr. Yeltsin, who turns 67 on Feb. 1, returned to Moscow Saturday after nearly two weeks at Valdai, a residence 300 kilometres northwest of the capital.

The Russian leader has been in near isolation since Jan. 4, when he left on a holiday designed to ensure a complete recovery from a viral chest infection which kept him away from the Kremlin for two weeks last month.

Mr. Yeltsin was filmed last week skiing and riding on a snowmobile as part of a campaign by officials to present the president as fit and healthy after a month of intense speculation over his health.

Although officials said the Kremlin chief had suffered an acute viral chest infection, media reports said the president had suffered a potentially serious brain spasm.

Mr. Yeltsin returned to part-time work at the Kremlin on Dec. 22 after working out a compromise deal with his doctors, who wanted him to remain confined longer to ensure he made a full recovery.

Monday, Mr. Yeltsin was to meet Interior Minister Anatoly Kulikov, Defence Minister Igor Sergeev and Kremlin chief of staff Valentin Yumashev.

A group of ambassadors were also to present their credentials to the Russian leader Monday.

U.S. senator encouraged by 'change of attitude' in N. Korea

SEOUL (AFP) — U.S. Senator Carl Levin, the most senior American official to visit North Korea in the past months said Monday he was encouraged by a "change of attitude" there, but reaffirmed that U.S. troops would stay in the south until there is no longer a threat.

"It is a long and bumpy road, but there was some light of hope," Mr. Levin told reporters here after a two-day stay in Seoul briefing U.S. and South Korean officials on his three-day trip to the Communist North last week.

Mr. Levin is the highest ranking U.S. official to visit Pyongyang since its leader Kim Jong-il became general-secretary of the North Korean Workers' Party last year.

"The sky is still very, very dark," Mr. Levin said, but added he was "hopeful" of improved relations between the two Koreas, and also between Pyongyang and Washington.

However, as long as the threat of war exists on the Korean peninsula, the United States will "maintain military presence" in South Korea and be always ready to take "swift response," he said.

Mr. Levin said he delivered an offer from South Korea President-elect Kim Dae-jung for inter-Korean dialogue during a meeting with North Korean vice foreign minister Kim Gye-Gwan.

"The response was very cautious," said Mr. Levin, adding Pyongyang had a "wait-and-see" attitude towards any improvement in North-South ties.

President-elect Kim also told Levin Monday that South Korea would be patient and not force the issue of South-North Korea dialogue.

The U.S. official also said he noticed that "the tone was less strident than before" when he met Major General Li Chan-Bok, the Korean People's Army commander at the truce village of Panmunjom.

Gen. Li attributed the "continued belligerence" between the United States and North Korea to "our joint fault," and did not solely blame the Americans as Pyongyang had always previously insisted, Mr. Levin reported.

"At least he used the words (joint fault)," said Mr. Levin, a Michigan Democrat and the senior minority member on the Senate Armed Services Committee, although Gen. Li did not directly acknowledge North Korea's fault.

Another glimmer of hope was that "international organisations there said they had confidence that (international) food aid was given to those needed, and that it was transparent," Mr. Levin said.

Also unlike reports a few months ago that North Koreans were not free to ride bicycles, Mr. Levin said there was "freer movement of bicycles."

"Perhaps that is a little glimmer of hope, as well," Mr. Levin said.

In a meeting with South Korean Foreign Minister Yoo Chong-Ha Monday, Mr. Levin said Pyongyang had asked for Washington's quick response to the latest World Food Program (WFP) appeal for food aid.

"North Korea thanked the U.S. for their help until now, and also asked for a quick response to the latest WFP appeal," a foreign ministry official here said.

The WFP launched a call January for \$378 million in aid, compared with \$141 million sought from donors last year.

Mr. Levin said he went to North Korea to observe the canning of spent reactor fuel in line with the 1994 agreement under which Pyongyang froze its suspected nuclear weapons program.

"This is the first time that elected officials from the U.S. were allowed in to Yongbyon (North Korea's nuclear facility)," Mr. Levin said, adding he witnessed that the canning of the nuclear fuel rods was being implemented.

He said he had heard a New York Times report that North Korea was suspected of developing a new underground nuclear weapons complex, but said Washington "would look into it if such a site exists."

Incense and tears as Sumatran aircrash victims laid to rest

PALEMBANG, Indonesia (AFP) — There were tears and incense as more than 1,000 people gathered here Monday to pay their last respects to the 104 victims of a Singaporean airline crash exactly one month ago.

Family members, government and religious officials, airline employees and locals gathered for a mass burial near this town on Sumatra, where SilkAir flight MI185 crashed into a river on Dec. 19.

"We simply hope that through the ceremony today we gain some small consolation that loved ones are being put to rest with dignity and respect," said S. Dhanabalan, chairman of SilkAir parent company Singapore Airlines Ltd. "In different ways we must continue to bear the loss of loved ones. That they are lost is grievous enough," he said during the 75-minute ceremony.

Mr. Dhanabalan said SilkAir would do everything in its power to ensure the grave site and a monument to be built on it would remain "a fitting memorial" to all those who lost their lives.

Most of the victims were Singaporeans, while others included Indonesians, Malaysians, Americans, French, Germans, Britons, Japanese and one each from Australia, Austria, Bosnia, India and Taiwan.

The grave at Kebun Bunga (Flower Garden) public cemetery near Palembang, some 60 kilometres from the crash site,

was donated by the South Sumatra provincial government.

Indonesian Transportation Minister Haryanto Dhanutirto, who also spoke to mourners, said the site, 15 minutes drive from the South Sumatra capital of Palembang, was chosen for its accessibility. His Singaporean counterpart, Mah Bow Tan, said in his tribute he was "especially disappointed" none of the 104 bodies had been found intact, but not for lack of effort.

The cause of Singapore's worst commercial aviation disaster is still under investigation in Washington, where the U.S. National Transportation Safety Board is examining the black boxes.

Mr. Mah said the next stage of the investigation would begin with reconstruction of what aircraft parts had been recovered as soon as they are transported to Jakarta.

He told a news conference at the airport here he hoped there would be an indication of the cause of the crash before the next anniversary.

Salvage workers spent more than two weeks dredging the murky Musi River, one of Indonesia's longest and widest, to recover the remains of the 97 passengers and seven crew members killed in the crash.

The aircraft's cockpit voice recorder and flight data recorder, known as the black boxes, were recovered but much of the Boeing

737-300 was torn to shreds.

"I was not too happy with the (search) exercise at the beginning, but they did all that they could," said 71-year-old Edward Scott, who flew here from Australia to say goodbye to his daughter Ruth, killed when the flight went down midway between Jakarta and Singapore. Representatives from nine faiths — Buddhism, Christianity, Islam, Bahai, Zoroastrianism, Taoism, Hinduism, Judaism and Sikhism — were each given three-to-five minutes to speak during the ceremony, reducing most of the crowd to silent sobbing.

Families could be seen clutching their loved ones as the speakers took their turn delivering tributes, mostly in English, with the Islamic and Buddhist sermons held in Indonesian.

The 40-by-70-metre grave site contained 93 coffins, 49 filled with the personal belongings of 42 Singaporeans and seven Indonesians.

"This is in accordance with Chinese beliefs that those departed should not leave without some of their belongings," said a SilkAir representative.

Two of the coffins were filled with human remains dredged from the muddy bottom of the river, while the remaining coffins were left empty. Only six victims were identified by their body parts and the remains of three have been sent for burial abroad — two to France and one to the United States.

Fictional fighting resumes on Thai-Cambodian border

BANGKOK (AFP) — Fresh fighting erupted Monday between forces loyal to ousted Cambodian Prime Minister Prince Norodom Ranariddh and strongman Hun Sen. Thai border troops said.

Sporadic shelling between the foes occurred in O'Smach, last stronghold of the prince's royalist forces, early in the day and continued into the afternoon, military officers said.

The skirmishes came after a one-day lull as both sides regrouped in the aftermath of intense battles which saw more than 300 shells land in Thailand over the past two days.

The hilltop bastion of O'Smach, besieged by powerful Second Premier Hun Sen's troops since August, straddles the Thai border and is clearly visible from Thai territory.

No injuries were reported in Monday's exchanges — which officers described as "regular" — but two stray shells fell on Thai territory causing no injuries, the military sources said.

Fighting had intensified Friday when Hun Sen's troops fired volleys of artillery and mortar shells onto dusty O'Smach during a two-day assault thought to be the latest attempt to overrun the border hamlet.

Four Thai soldiers and nine members of the royalist forces were injured during the two days of clashes which came as dissident politician Sam Rainsy tried to broker a ceasefire.

Officers said Monday that about 300 of Hun Sen's soldiers had moved up to the border with Thailand — against which the royalist forces are pinned — and were blocked by Thai troops.

Hun Sen, who ousted the prince in a weekend of bloody street fighting in July, has vowed to rout the royalists from their last base.

Hun Sen slams U.N. rights group ahead of Robinson visit to Cambodia

PREAK THMEI, Cambodia (AFP) — Cambodian strongman Hun Sen Monday slammed U.N. human rights officials four days ahead of a visit by their boss, Mary Robinson, the U.N. High Commissioner for Human Rights.

The powerful second prime minister, speaking at the opening of a new temple outside the capital, accused officials at a U.N. human rights centre in Phnom Penh of acting in a condescending way and warned that repeated instances would be met with countermeasures.

"They always put our heads," Hun Sen said, referring to a gesture that Cambodian tradition holds to be highly insulting. "But when they put Hun Sen's head, I will give back an elbow."

Deposed co-Premier "Prince" (Norodom) Ranariddh patted Hun Sen's head and when I gave him an elbow, he fled," he said, referring to the prince's effective ouster in fierce fighting in the capital in July.

Hun Sen's remarks preceded Ms. Robinson's visit, due to begin Thursday, and follow Sunday's arrival of Thomas Hammarberg, the U.N.'s Special Representative for Human Rights in Cambodia.

Mr. Hammarberg, said Sunday that July's scheduled elections were at risk

of not being free and fair because the government appeared not to have made any progress with investigations into politically motivated human rights abuses after the prince's ouster.

More than 40 of the prince's supporters were executed following his ouster prompting hundreds more to flee the country fearing persecution.

The U.N.'s human rights office for Cambodia office assisted and escorted many of those who fled.

Hun Sen did not mention Mr. Hammarberg's comments but complained that centre was violating Cambodian law and criticised it for lodging a protest last week alleging that its privilege of diplomatic immunity had been violated.

The office "had the intention to help a criminal escape to a foreign country and after that they accused the Cambodian authorities of violating the U.N.'s rights," Hun Sen said.

He referred to the case of Chau Sokhon, a member of the deposed prince's royalist FUNCINPEC party, who was arrested while trying to leave Cambodia under U.N. protection earlier this month.

Police plucked Chau Sokhon, a military police commander who had been jailed for drug smuggling but whose conviction had

been overturned on appeal, from a U.N.-flagged vehicle at Phnom Penh's airport on Jan. 3.

Justice ministry officials, who effectively suspended the appeals court judges after their decision claiming it was an error, justified Chau Sokhon's arrest by saying he still had time to serve on another conviction.

The U.N. centre has not taken issue with the facts in the Chau Sokhon case, but last Thursday filed a formal protest against the circumstances in which he was arrested.

Hun Sen said the protest was misguided, attempting to criticise the government for doing a proper job.

"When U.N. officials violated the rights of the Cambodian administration and the Cambodian court they did not even consider it," he said.

"All of you should look at yourselves clearly and look at the law and traditions and rules of Cambodia."

"Don't ever think you are better, because Cambodia also has some experts. Otherwise we would not build the Angkor Wat temples," he said, referring to the famed 12th century temple complex in northern Siem Reap province.

"Angkor Wat was around long before you were born."

China reshuffles top posts in three provinces

BEIJING (AFP) — China has reshuffled its top leadership in the provinces of Jiangxi, Hunan and Yunnan, the official Xinhua news agency reported Monday.

In eastern Jiangxi, Shu Huiguo, the deputy party secretary from 1995, was moved to the largely honorific post of head of the local people's congress.

In central Hunan, Wang Maolin, who had held the all powerful post of provincial party secretary since 1993, was also

moved to head the local people's congress.

The vice governor of southwestern Yunnan, Li Jiating, was promoted to governor. Xinhua said.

Sunday, the all-powerful party secretaries of southern Guangxi and northern Inner Mongolia were both moved to the post of head of the local people's government.

The moves have come during each province's people's congress, which follow on from the National People's Congress in March.

Police defuse bomb in Basque area

SAN SEBASTIAN, Spain (AFP) — Police defused a bomb planted in a post office in the Basque province of Guipuzcoa after receiving a tip-off, authorities said Monday. No one was hurt in the operation.

A road service group had received an anonymous phone call Sunday night alerting them that a device had been planted in the post office in Hondarribia, near San Sebastian.

Police said they suspected that the Basque separatist group ETA was responsible.

World
E. Timore
holed up i
French
mission in
Jakarta
leave for
Portugal

Nuclear
waste sen
to leave
for Japa

WFP U.N. France
A large-scale
nuclear waste
shipment from
France to Japan
was delayed
because of
problems with
the container
ships. The
shipment was
expected to
leave France
last week but
was delayed
because of
problems with
the container
ships. The
shipment was
expected to
leave France
last week but
was delayed
because of
problems with
the container
ships.

U.S. senate encouraged by 'change of attitude' in N. Korea

SEOUL (AFP) — U.S. officials here Monday said they were encouraged by a "change of attitude" in North Korea, but there was still a long way to go. Mr. Lewin, the U.S. ambassador to North Korea, said in a statement that he was "encouraged by the fact that the North Korean leadership has agreed to a change of attitude in its foreign policy." He said that the North Korean leadership had agreed to a change of attitude in its foreign policy, but that there was still a long way to go. He said that the North Korean leadership had agreed to a change of attitude in its foreign policy, but that there was still a long way to go.

E. Timorese holed up in French mission in Jakarta leave for Portugal

JAKARTA (AFP) — Five young East Timorese who had taken refuge in the French embassy here since Thursday, have left for the airport to fly to Portugal via The Hague, sources here said Monday. Their departure followed the usual procedures and was arranged by the International Committee of the Red Cross. The five youths from the troubled Indonesian territory of East Timor jumped the gate of the French embassy Thursday and demanded to be allowed to leave for Portugal, sources said. In recent years more than 130 other East Timorese have sought refuge in various embassies in the Indonesian capital before leaving for Portugal, via the Netherlands. They are normally taken to Portugal after a few days following procedures under the auspices of the International Committee of the Red Cross. Lisbon, the former colonial ruler of East Timor, considers the East Timorese as Portuguese citizens and grants them identity cards and passports. The last batch of East Timorese to break into an embassy were six people including two children who entered the Austrian embassy in September. The six asked to leave for Portugal but are still believed to be at the mission since Jakarta has refused to allow two of them to leave the country, saying they were involved in terrorism. East Timor is a former Portuguese colony seized by Indonesia in 1975 amid international condemnation. The United Nations still recognises Portugal as the legitimate administrator of the territory, where Indonesian troops are accused of human rights abuses.

Nuclear waste set to leave for Japan

CHERBOURG, France (AFP) — A cargo of reprocessed Japanese nuclear waste will leave this north-western French port Wednesday, state-owned reprocessor, Compagnie Generale des Matieres Nucleaires (COGEMA), announced Monday. COGEMA, which operates a reprocessing plant at La Hague near here, said the vitrified waste would be carried back to Japan in 60 containers aboard the ship Pacific Swan. The containers were moved secretly during the reprocessing plant to COGEMA's port terminal at Cherbourg overnight Sunday under police surveillance. COGEMA spokesman Hervé Hancard said the Pacific Swan would sail Wednesday but that its route would be revealed Thursday. The environmental organisation Greenpeace and the U.S. Nuclear Control Institute (NCI) said in Washington last Tuesday that the Pacific Swan would pass through the Panama Canal. The two organisations said that the route posed unacceptable risks for regional security and called on the United States to refuse transit for the ship through the canal. A cargo of nuclear waste was transported around Cape Horn in 1995 and a second around the Cape of Good Hope in 1997.



Croatian Serb Slavko Dokmanovic (left) is flanked by a United Nations security man at the United Nations War Crimes Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia in The Hague (Reuters photo)

Labour launches campaign to win back blue-collar support after 1996 rout

HOBART. Australia (AFP) — Australia's Labour leaders launched their campaign here Monday to win an election expected this year, but warned they must regain grass roots support to have any chance. Boosted by a new poll showing Labour held its lead over the government into the New Year, party chiefs said they had a chance of regaining government just two years after the worst defeat in recent history. But opposition leader Kim Beazley told the first of his party's first national conference in opposition for 15 years: "We must push on and work even harder than we have these last two years to earn government." "And once we have earned it, we must work even harder to be worthy of retaining it," Mr. Beazley told 190 conference delegates. The four-day conference will commit a future Labour government to achieving economic growth of at least four per cent, faster employment growth and taxation reform that will crack down on tax shelters for high income earners. The conference Monday agreed to rebuild a stronger and more independent public service after Prime Minister John Howard's government axed 30,000 public sector jobs in the 22 months since it won power. Deputy leader Gareth Evans underlined the pitch to win back the blue collar vote lost by Labour at the 1996 election when he admitted that a key factor in the defeat was the perception that the rich had made substantial gains during 13 years of Labour government. "Upper income groups, by and large, did well during those years," he told the conference's opening session. Mr. Evans said the rich enjoyed substantial incomes and access to advances in technology as part of the globalisation of the economy. But for lower-income groups, it had been a different story, with wages growing more slowly and little access to new technologies. A speech by Labour Party President Barry Jones highlighted the race theme, which could be a dominant election issue following the conservative government's battle with the indigenous minority last year. Mr. Jones accused Mr. Howard of being divisive in his persistent refusal to apologise to Aborigines for past wrongs against them. Mr. Howard angered Aborigines with a plan, amended by the Upper House Senate, to dilute native land rights and by refusing to apologise on behalf of the nation to the stolen generations of children separated from their parents by official policy. "The prime minister confuses guilt with shame," said former science minister Jones. "Innocence is the opposite of guilt, shame is the opposite of pride." Australians had felt a great sense of pride for the actions of their troops at Gallipoli in World War I, although most were not there. "But we also feel shame about cruelty and neglect in past generations. Not a shame that paralyses action, but a shame that pushes us on to create a juster society." Mr. Jones said, however, that Labour had mistakenly believed there was widespread community consensus on issues of race, sexuality, gender and tolerance. "We failed to provide after-sales service, to reassure voters who felt threatened by the speed of social and economic change," he said. He defended the policies of the last Labour government but added: "We needed to listen far more, and to explain, explain, explain, taking advantage of every opportunity to clarify and reassure."

Croatian Serb stands trial for Vukovar atrocity

THE HAGUE (AFP) — Croatian Serb Slavko Dokmanovic went on trial Monday before the U.N. war crimes court for his alleged role in the massacre of 261 civilians in the eastern Croatian city of Vukovar in 1991. Dokmanovic, who was mayor of Vukovar until fighting erupted in 1991 between Croats and Serbs in Croatia, faces charges of war crimes and crimes against humanity. His lawyers said he would plead not guilty to the U.N. International Criminal Tribunal for the former Yugoslavia. They say Dokmanovic was not even in Vukovar at the time of the massacre. Monday's hearing began two hours late, to give the court time to view video tapes behind closed doors, a source close to the defence said. It was not known what was on the tapes, but it was possible they might have been recordings of testimony made in Belgrade early this month by four witnesses whose identities have been kept secret, the source said. Alternatively, they might have been television tapes of the fall of Vukovar, he added. In November 1991 when the then Yugoslav army captured Vukovar after a three-month siege, about 300 people took refuge at the city hospital. They included civilians and wounded soldiers. The Yugoslav troops evacuated these people to Ovcara, a hamlet about 10 kilometres away, where the majority were killed. In 1996, court investigators discovered a mass grave at Ovcara from which 200 bodies have been exhumed so far. Dokmanovic, 48, was not on the official list of persons charged by the U.N. court but his name was on another list which was kept secret. He was arrested on June 27 last year near Vukovar after an operation by the U.N. Transitional Administration for Eastern Slavonia. Three Yugoslav army officers believed to have ordered the Vukovar massacre, namely Mile Mrksic, Miroslav Radic and Veselin Stijevic, are still at large. Yugoslavia has refused to hand them over to the U.N. tribunal, arguing that its constitution forbids the extradition of Yugoslav nationals. The trial of Dokmanovic could prove an embarrassment for Belgrade since the capture of Vukovar was carried out by the Yugoslav army, which at the time took its orders exclusively from the Serbian leadership, notably Slobodan Milosevic, then president of Serbia and now president of federal Yugoslavia.

Titanic wins best movie in Golden Globe awards

LOS ANGELES (AFP) — The epic "Titanic" won the best drama motion picture late Sunday in the Golden Globe awards, handed out by the Hollywood Foreign Press Association. Titanic director James Cameron was awarded the top prize in the best motion picture director. The Golden Globe awards are widely seen as an indicator of what will happen in the upcoming Oscar award ceremony, to be held here on March 23. With its \$200-million budget, the three-hour disaster epic has set an all-time cost record. Titanic stars Kate Winslet and Leonardo DiCaprio as two young people who meet and fall in love on the supposedly unsinkable ship, which hit an iceberg and sank on its maiden voyage across the Atlantic in 1912 with the loss of 1,500 lives. Nominees in the best motion picture category included "Amistad", "The Boxer", "Good Will Hunting" and "L.A. Confidential". "As Good as It Gets", won in the best musical or comedy category. Its stars, Jack Nicholson and Helen Hunt, won in the best comedy actor and best comedy actress categories. The best dramatic actor award went to former Easy Rider star Peter Fonda, for his role as a beekeeper in "Ulee's Gold". Majesty Mrs. Brown." In the supporting roles, Burt Reynolds won an award for his part as a porn movie producer in "Boogie Nights", and Kim Basinger for her part as a femme fatale in "L.A. Confidential". The best foreign film award was given to the Belgian movie "Ma Vie en Rose" (My Life in Pink). Newcomers Mat Damon and Ben Affleck won the best screenplay award for the movie "Good Will Hunting." The Hollywood Foreign Press Association also hands out awards for television shows. The "X-Files" won the best television series award. Ally McBeal won in the best musical or comedy category. The show's star, Calista Flockhart, won in the best actress in a musical or comedy category. Michael J. Fox won the best actor in a musical or comedy category for his role in "Spin City." The best television dramatic actor awards were given to Anthony Edwards of "ER", and Christine Lahti of Chicago Hope. One surprise award was given to Shirley MacLaine, who won the Cecil B. DeMille Award for "outstanding contribution to the entertainment field." The Golden Globes awards have become increasingly popular over the last three years when NBC television began to broadcast the events. This year the station devoted three hours to the event.



Kim Basinger holds her Golden Globe Award she won for Best Supporting Actress in a Motion Picture for her role in the film "L.A. Confidential" at the 55th annual Golden Globe Awards in Beverly Hills (Reuters photo)

Branson still eager for balloon bid despite team-mate's accident

LONDON (AFP) — British millionaire Richard Branson still wants to make his third bid to become the first person to fly non-stop round the world in a balloon, despite a serious accident Sunday involving one of his team-mates, he said. Alex Ritchie, 52, the engineer in the three-man balloon team, suffered serious injuries during a parachute jump in Morocco. For unexplained reasons, his parachute did not open until he had almost reached the ground and even then it did not unfurl completely. "Although he is seriously injured, he is believed to be stable and his injuries are not thought to be life-threatening," said Mr. Branson, who has sent an ambulance aircraft to Morocco to bring his friend back to Britain. Mr. Ritchie made a free-flight training jump from 4,200 metres along with the third member of the team, Per Lindstrand. But his parachute failed to open when it should have done. The Virgin empire boss said Saturday that he hoped to leave on his third round-the-world balloon adventure next week-end. He said a decision would be taken Monday on finding a replacement for Mr. Ritchie. He said that if weather permitted, he hoped to take off in his Virgin Global Challenger craft from a spot near Marrakech in Morocco where the team has set up its headquarters. In an abortive first attempt in January 1997, Mr. Branson was forced to make an emergency landing in the Algerian desert because of technical problems. Mr. Ritchie was part of the team on that occasion and took great personal risks to slow the descent of the balloon when it seemed likely to crash. He climbed onto the roof of the cabin and managed to jettison two drums, each containing one tonne of fuel. The accident to Mr. Ritchie is the latest of a series of setbacks which Mr. Branson has encountered since he set his heart on making the epic balloon flight. After failing last January, he failed again in December when his balloon took off while it was being filled with helium in Morocco. It was recovered but was badly damaged.

C-TOWN
Department stores

ON THE OCCASION OF THE HAPPY EID

TOMORROW & DAY AFTER TOMORROW

SALE

20% DISCOUNT

On Everything You Purchase From The Second Floor

C-TOWN AMMAN 7th CIRCLE TEL: 814129

Jordan Times

An independent Arab political daily published in English by the Jordan Press Foundation. Established 1975.
Jordan Times: 684311, 699634, 667171, 603585
Facsimile: 696183
E-mail: jtimes@go.com.jo
Web Sites: http://accessme.com/JordanTimes/

Chairman of the Board of Directors:
MAHMOUD AL KAYED

Director General:
MOHAMMAD AMAD

Editor-in-Chief:
GEORGE S. HAWATMEH

Editorial and advertising offices:

Jordan Press Foundation,
University Road, P.O. Box 6710, Amman, Jordan.
Telephone: 684311, 699634, 667171, 603585
Facsimile: 696183
E-mail: jtimes@go.com.jo
Web Sites: http://accessme.com/JordanTimes/

The Jordan Times is published daily except Fridays. Subscription and advertising rates are available from the Jordan Times advertising department.

Question over Rafah ban

FRIDAY'S BANNING of the Turkish Islamist Welfare (Rafah) Party may be justified under the strict interpretation of the constitution of the country, but it is certainly wrong politically. For one thing, the legal reasoning of the Turkish court that ruled in this case could be repugnant to international human rights law since the right of everyone including political parties to freedom of thought, conscience and religion is well enshrined in human rights conventions. Equally protected under that law is the right to promote one's ideas by peaceful means without provoking racial, ethnic or religious hostility.

The court could have stood on more solid foundation had it confined its ban on Welfare's leader Necmettin Erbakan who had allegedly likened his party to an Islamic Jihad Army and was quoted as saying that it will one day win power regardless of whether the transition is "sweet or bloody." To have opted instead to expand the scope of the judicial ban to include the entire party is certainly contrary to the principles of pluralistic democracy, however.

What damage the ruling will have in political terms cannot be assessed with any degree of certainty. The damage could for instance take the form of a backlash which would propel the Islamists' popularity to new heights and strengthen rather than diminish their political fortunes. Turkish Prime Minister Mesut Yilmaz was the first to express reservations about the ruling. Many other Turkish political leaders and parliamentarians also joined the bandwagon of critics. This not to mention the sharp criticism that the court's decision drew from even Turkey's closest allies. Both the U.S. and Britain, which is presiding over the European Union (EU) this year, expressed regrets over the ruling.

The dissolved Welfare Party is busy regrouping under a new name while at the same time it is seeking redress in the European court of human rights. The only way out of this dilemma now is for the latter court to become seized with the controversy and pass its own judgement on it. Since Ankara is eager to join the EU, the Turkish government should be the first to welcome such a judicial intervention.

ARABIC PRESS COMMENTARIES

Al Arab Al Yawm's Taher Al Adwan said the criminals who slaughtered eight people including an Iraqi embassy official in Amman on Saturday have done great harm to Jordan. Jordan opened its doors to the Iraqis in genuine manifestation of its humanitarian concern for and national solidarity with the Arab people who have been suffering under the U.N. embargo. But, he said, some Iraqi guests have been intent on straining Jordanian-Iraqi relations and have carried out attacks on Iraqi diplomats and businessmen in Jordan. The crime committed in the Babia district and an earlier failed attack on an Iraqi embassy official were designed to harm bilateral relations and at the same time cause instability in the Kingdom, the writer charged. He said these assaults have sounded the alarm, and Jordanians are called on to remain vigilant and take extra measures to prevent such atrocities from being committed on their territory.

Al Ra'i's Fahed Fanek Monday said the American president's coming meetings in Washington with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and Palestinian President Yasser Arafat will be the last chance for the president to find a way to end the deadlock in the Palestinian-Israeli peace negotiations. If President Clinton really wants to establish peace in the Middle East this is his chance to do so in his last term in office because 1999 will mark the beginning of the presidential campaign in the U.S. when full attention would be given to the peace process, according to the writer. He said President Clinton realises that if Netanyahu is unable to reach a consensus with his ministers on the question of redeploying Israeli troops in Palestinian territory it is impossible for him to reach an agreement with the Palestinians. The president also realises that the Palestinian leadership is now in a very embarrassing situation and that it has two options: to succumb completely to Israel's wishes and whims or to open the way for further acts of violence. The writer stressed that Clinton was not only a witness to the signing of the Israeli-Palestinian Declaration of Principles signed at the White House in 1993 but he is also considered the guarantor for its implementation.

The View from Fourth Circle

Coming to terms with the Palestinian (and Israeli) 'right of return'

By Rami G. Khouri

THE CURRENT stalemate in Israeli-Palestinian peace-making breeds more mutual frustration and fear, and also heightens awareness of the core issue that must be resolved to the satisfaction of all in any lasting Arab-Israeli peace: the basic rights, current status, and future fate of the Palestinian refugees who were displaced from their homes and lands during the 1947-48 creation and 1967 expansion of the state of Israel.

The status and rights of the Palestine refugees are the central issue for the Arabs; and the heart of the heart of the issue is the Palestinian "right of return" — the idea that dozens of United Nations General Assembly resolutions (with the same legal validity as the resolution establishing the Israeli state) demand that the Palestinians made refugees in 1947-48 have the right to repatriation or compensation. If there is a single phrase that Palestinians since 1948 have rallied around and made a symbol of their national struggle for rights and dignity, it is the Arabic phrase "sa na'ood" — or "we shall return". For Palestinians, this phrase resonates with the same emotional, personal and national dimensions that "we shall overcome" had for the civil rights struggle in the United States, and that phrases like "next year in Jerusalem" and "never again" have for Jews. All these words blend traumatic and real suffering with apocalyptic fears and an epic, heroic determination to live and to live in dignity, security, and national vitality.

The "right of return" terrifies Israelis, for most Israelis interpret it to mean that several million Palestinians will return to their homes in 1948 Palestine, thereby obliterating the state of the Jewish people, or the Jewish state, that is the raison d'être of Zionism and Israel. This issue will be resolved in the end by negotiations between Israelis and Palestinians. I would like to suggest here a more nuanced (and, I would argue, a more accurate) interpretation of the Palestinian "right of return" that could respond fairly to the twin national rights of Palestinian and Israelis. Any serious discussion of refugees and displaced persons in the context of the Arab-Israeli conflict must address the rights of all concerned, including Palestinians, Jews and other Arabs who have claims that have not been satisfied. I leave the issue of Jewish refugee or compensation claims to Jews and Israelis to address. I would suggest that the Palestinian "right of return" should be understood as having multiple dimensions, in terms of quality, place, and time, including the following:

1. The right to return to particular homes, lands, businesses and properties from which the Palestinians were displaced during the modern Palestinian-Zionist conflict.
2. The right to be compensated materially or financially

for the value of material properties lost during the conflict.

3. The right to be compensated morally, emotionally, and politically for the losses and pains endured as a consequence of becoming refugees.

4. The right to return to a life of normalcy that comprises normal personal and family development and the anticipation of a normal life for one's children.

5. The right to "return" to, or to achieve for the first time, the protection of a sovereign Palestinian Arab political and national authority in a viable territorial state in the land of historical Palestine.

6. The right to return to a situation in which personal and communal life is free from the particular vulnerabilities, cruel uncertainties and pain of refugee status and statelessness.

7. The right to "return" to, or achieve for the first time, the rights, privileges and responsibilities of citizenship, such as voting, taxation, and access to one's own systems of justice, health care, education, social security and other such basic human rights and needs.

8. The right to return to the integrity of communal and national life, including the right to cultural, political, religious, economic and other basic expressions of one's identity and vitality.

9. The right to return to a state of human dignity — to be rehumanised instead of dehumanised — through a combination of the above material and political factors as well as a satisfactory redress of grievances in moral or emotional terms. This might include, for example, admissions of responsibility and culpability by Israelis and Jews for their role in the advent of the Palestinian refugee condition, and perhaps at a later stage in the peace-making process, Jewish expressions of regret, remorse, or apology to the Palestinians, and requests for forgiveness and reconciliation. (For such gestures to be possible and meaningful, they would have to be reciprocated by pertinent Palestinian and Arab expressions of equal magnitude and sincerity, as deemed appropriate by both sides during the process of peace-making.)

These are only some of the dimensions of the "right of return" for Palestinians, who continue to debate the issue in their own hearts and minds. A careful consideration of the above list should make it clear that the right of return has territorial, material, political, personal, communal, national, emotional, and compensatory dimensions, which can and should be appreciated separately as well as collectively. Different aspects of such a right of return could be achieved in various places: in Israel and the lands of pre-1948 Palestine, in a Palestinian state in Gaza

and the West Bank, in other Arab states where Palestinians might negotiate their status if they enjoy Palestinian citizenship from their state in Palestine, and in other countries around the world. Also, the right(s) of return as outlined above could be achieved over a period of time, in a staggered manner.

Two things strike me as very important in considering this issue. First, the right of return does not necessarily mean that several million Palestinians will all return to Jaffa, Haifa and Ramleh, in Israel today. Palestinians can satisfactorily exercise their right(s) of return in a manner that does not require the destruction of the State of Israel or the negation of Zionism for the Jews, i.e., the Palestinian and Jewish "rights of return" to conditions of national integrity and security in their common ancestral homeland in historical Palestine can be exercised simultaneously and equally. Second, virtually all of the above dimensions of the Palestinian right of return are mirror images of the Jewish need for personal protection and for communal and national integrity during the period 1890-1945, when modern Zionism was born from the urgent Jewish requirement for security, statehood and sovereignty.

It is appropriate this month, as the world rightly recalls the vulgarity of anti-Jewish anti-Semitism as expressed in the Dreyfus Affair in France a century ago, to recall also the wider implications and consequences of what the Dreyfus affair meant to Jews in the past century: it symbolised their terrible need for a "right of return" to conditions of national normalcy, and, in retrospect, it symbolised their capacity to work to exercise that right by establishing an Israeli state that should be seen today as a spell-binding model for Palestinians. For the Israeli right of return to statehood has taken place on only part of what Jews consider to be their national patrimony, has gathered in less than half the world Jewish population, and has satisfactorily provided for the personal and national well-being of Jews everywhere by means other than physically returning every Jewish person in the world to Palestine. Israel is a fascinating model of how the "right of return" can be enjoyed in terms of a combination of territorial, material, political, personal, communal, national, emotional, and compensatory dimensions, over a period of time, in different places around the world.

As we ponder Dreyfus, and watch Israelis commemorate their 50th anniversary of statehood, we should also be prompted to work to begin the return journey home for Palestinians, so that the return journey for Jews and Israelis can also be completed with lasting success and safety.

How firm Clinton will be still about 'serious negotiation' remains unclear

By George S. Hishmeh

WASHINGTON — U.S. President Bill Clinton is reliably expected to spell out his administration's strong views on reviving the stalled Middle East peace process when he meets today with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

But whether the American president will go as far as saying, as he has been publicly urged, that his administration will support the creation of a Palestinian state in the Israeli-occupied areas of the West Bank and the Gaza Strip remains to be seen.

Secretary of State Madeleine Albright assured a television audience Sunday that her boss "will make his views known" to the disagreeable Israeli when they meet at the White House after he pointedly turned down a similar session last fall when the Israeli leader was on a U.S. tour because of Israeli foot-dragging in peace negotiations with the Palestinians.

No one here is expecting fireworks at the Tuesday encounter, despite reported advice given the American president by some American Jewish community leaders to exert pressure on Netanyahu "until he either bends or breaks." There is, however, a consensus among Mideast watchers that the atmosphere will be chilly, if not outright confrontational.

The word is out that the Clinton administration expects "tough decisions" from Netanyahu and Palestinian leader Yasser Arafat who will be also meet with the president on Thursday. The Israeli leader is coming to Washington without offering to hand over a specific percentage of the occupied West Bank despite repeated U.S. urging that there be a "credible and significant" Israeli pullback — the much-delayed second redeployment — and a freeze on Israeli settlements. It was the right-wing government's decision to build a settlement in Arab East Jerusalem last March that virtually derailed the peace process.

White House National Security Adviser Samuel Berger was more blunt in a television interview Sunday. He said:

"What we hope to do this week with Prime Minister Netanyahu, later with Chairman Arafat, is to discuss with them what our thoughts are, what our ideas are for how to narrow the gap, how to bridge the gap and get back into a serious negotiation."

The only give from the right-wing Israeli government came a week ago, and it was disappointing — "not help-

ful" was the official characterisation. Actually, it amounted to a slap in the face for the Clinton administration since the Israeli government said it would only set a "ceiling" of the maximum amount of West Bank areas it would relinquish to the Palestinians — only after Netanyahu returns from his talks in Washington.

There is, however, a consensus among Mideast watchers that the atmosphere will be chilly, if not outright confrontational.

Any Israeli pullback, the Israeli government declared, was contingent on Palestinian fulfillment of a 12-page list of demands. It further designated wide areas of the occupied Palestinian areas as "vital national interests." In short, Israel had no intention of a pullback.

The Israeli leader's trip here was typically preceded by a barrage of anti-Palestinian diatribe, repeating an Israeli call for Palestinian "reciprocity." A pro-Israeli columnist writing in the Washington Post led off with charges that the Palestinians have not lived up to any of the clauses in the "Note for the Record" that U.S. Special Middle East Coordinator Dennis Ross worked out a year ago this month between Netanyahu and Arafat.

These include, among others, a Palestinian revision of the Palestinian National Charter, reduction in the size of the Palestinian police force, and "fighting terror and preventing violence." But, naturally, the columnist neglected to mention that Israel has not fulfilled its commitment to further withdrawal as specified in the U.S.-endorsed Hebron agreement as well negotiations on the Gaza airport and port and safe passage between the Gaza Strip and the West Bank.

Another aspect of this week's diplomacy that has irked some opinion-makers in Washington is that the United States is progressively playing "a more vital and interventionist role in Arab-Israeli peacemaking than it has at any time in the past decade."

Robert Satloff, executive director of the Washington Institute for Near East Policy, found the growing role of

American officials "for drafting accords and arbitrating disagreements on tactical security matters (as) problematic, if not downright counterproductive."

He continued in an article published this week in the pro-Israeli magazine, The New Republic: "On a day-to-day basis, the gears of the (Palestinian-Israeli) relationship do not turn without U.S. knowledge and input. And under this setup, Washington serves as Arafat's de facto advocate — a huge achievement for the Palestinian leader."

Consequently, he finds the Palestinian leader "missing" from this trilateral setup, "a background player." Similarly, monitoring the Palestinian National Authority has emerged as "merely a sub-plot in the larger drama of U.S.-Israeli give-and-take."

Satloff was firm in his expectations that U.S.-Israel relations are "sure to worsen" when the Arab-Israeli negotiations turn to issues of land, peace and security, and in the face of an "immovable Palestinian demand for a piece of Jerusalem and all of the West Bank."

Under the circumstances, Satloff concluded, "how America juggles the role of ally, advocate, and judge will pose serious tests to both the strength of the U.S.-Israeli relationship and the fate of the peace process."

The attempt to give the Palestinian leader a red eye on the eve of his arrival here for the crucial discussions backfired when an attempt for a ground-breaking official visit by Arafat to the U.S. Holocaust Museum in Washington was rebuffed by museum officials.

Clinton administration officials were embarrassed by the decision of the officials at the museum, which is funded by the U.S. government. Two senior aides of Secretary Albright, Dennis Ross and his deputy Aaron Miller, had been behind the arrangements for what could have been the first visit by an Arab leader to an exhibition on Nazi genocide. Ross and Miller, who are Jewish, are members of the board of directors of the museum.

Netanyahu, speaking on American television Sunday, refused to be drawn into making any comment on the event, and Albright herself said the retraction of the invitation was inappropriate.

The writer is a retired USIS editor who now lives in Washington. He contributed this article to the Jordan Times.

LETTERS

Here, and here to help

To the editor:

I REFER to a letter in the Jordan Times (Sunday, Jan. 18) titled "I have had enough" from Arafah Al Ashi, in which he complains about the appalling treatment of animals in this country. It was in fact an open letter to any organisation protecting animals in Jordan.

I would like to say that we are the Jordanian Society for the Protection of Animals (JSPA) and have been established for almost ten years. Yet it is incredible that still there are many people in Jordan who have never heard of us. Therefore, I have asked the Jordan Times if they would kindly print the society's name, telephone numbers and fax number every day in the Daily Guide, so that they can be seen by people needing to contact us with any animal problems. We would be grateful if Al Ra'i could do the same for us.

It is true that animals are abused on a daily basis in Jordan. Everyday we tell both adults and children not to throw stones at dogs or puppies, or not to beat up a donkey. We constantly treat kerosene horses and try to advise their owners how to look after them, but it falls on deaf ears! People who could intervene do not, they prefer to walk away. We do not receive much help from police or authorities concerned, as they are just not interested.

We have an education programme in which a teacher visits schools around Amman to promote the welfare and care of animals. We believe we have to start with the young people because most of the older ones are set in their ways and do not want to listen. There is a good response from the children, but at present it is a drop in the ocean. We need to expand as time goes on and hope to do so gradually, as we are not, of course, reaching every child in the country. We have made a video on donkeys, and another on dogs, showing the right way and the wrong way to treat the animals. These are being shown in schools in the education programme.

Many adults and children think that animals do not feel pain. We explain to them that they are flesh and blood as we are, and that they certainly do feel pain. We have also taken in many donkeys at our two clinics, which have been abandoned because of some bad injury. Many people must have seen them, crawling around on three legs, yet no-one bothered to contact us. In the Jordan Valley we are well-known from north to south and our vehicles are around daily with telephone numbers on both sides. Those people who have no telephone can ask someone to phone, but it's usually too much bother!

People who are concerned and would like more information can phone JSPA in Wadi Seer, Amman at 865451 from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m., (2 p.m. during Ramadan), and in the Jordan Valley 05-582165. At other hours, Tel. 811687 and 815782. The fax number at Wadi Seer headquarters is 865452. We also have a slot on JTV Teletext every afternoon. If anyone sees an injured animal or one being abused we need to know as soon as possible, and its exact whereabouts. We have literature available explaining about Islamic teachings on Animal Welfare, and we welcome anybody who wants to become a member of JSPA.

Chris Larter
Clinic Supervisor and Field Officer
JSPA, Wadi Seer, Amman

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

Clinton mullin

House clears budget after marathon debate

(Continued from page 1)

launched last year to cushion the negative impact of economic reforms on Jordan's poor. He said the government has allocated JD6 million to support the programme that will be carried out over several years. More funding of the programme is expected to come through grants and loans from other countries and institutions.

"The government is seeking foreign financing for the social security package, because donors are willing to finance such humanitarian projects and not others that are important to us and not to them," Dr. Majali said.

He said the government

was committed to privatisation as part of efforts to liberalise the economy and join world markets.

He also sought to calm agitated deputies who expressed fears that Israeli investors would buy major shares in several state-run companies due to be privatised under the scheme.

He dismissed allegations that there were 80 Jordanian-Israeli ventures. "Fear God. The truth is totally different. It is the Israelis who fear openness. They are the ones who closed on themselves, who live with the mentality of siege."

The government in September allowed for 100 per cent foreign ownership in banking, telecommunications, transport and insur-

ance sectors. Until then, foreign ownership was limited to 49 per cent. However, three sectors are excluded: construction and contracting, general retail trade and mining.

The mining sector includes the strategic potash and phosphates industries, along with cement that already have substantial Arab holdings.

Now that the House granted the government its vote of confidence and endorsed its budget, many politicians expect Dr. Majali to reshuffle his cabinet formed in March while Parliament was in recess to supervise the Nov. 4 elections.

Several politicians said they expected the prime

minister to include up to 12 new ministers, some of them lawmakers, in the much-expected reshuffle.

Six deputies in the 80-seat House did not show up for Monday's vote. Those who voted against the bill include Khalil Haddadin, Nasha'at Hamarneh, Basam Haddadin, Mohammad Azayeh, Abdullah Akaleh, Mohammad Bataineh, Mohammad Oran, Mohammad Bani Hani, Osama Malkawi, Nazih Ammarin, Walid Awajun, Ziad Shwikh, Khalik Atieh, Mohammad Abu-Hdeib and Ayed Adaleh.

Team of senior officials formed to investigate Rabia slayings

(Continued from page 1)

inside the villa and stabbed her too," Ms. Lidaki said in her statements to the police.

She said that the killings began with "a big fight between five Iraqis and the Iraqi businessman, Namir Ochi, who was in the home of his employer, Sami George."

"They exchanged accusations and the Iraqis said he owed them large sums of money. Ochi refused their demands so they stabbed him and attacked all those present," she told the investigators.

The witness said that the killers believed "everyone present was dead, including me. They left the house, and just then the Iraqi diplomat arrived. They stabbed him and left only to

return again some moments later with his wife, who they also stabbed."

An Amman-based Iraqi opposition group denied news reports that one of the Iraqis killed in the attack was a member of an opposition group.

"Mr. Sami has no relationship with the Iraqi opposition," said Mo'ad Abdul Rahim, a spokesman of the Iraqi National Accord.

"He is a well-known Iraqi rich man who has investments in Europe, Jordan and Arab countries but he had no affiliation with any Iraqi opposition group," Mr. Mo'ad told the Jordan Times.

"The attack is nothing but the settling of accounts between Iraqi merchants and wealthy persons," Mr.

Mo'ad said.

A government official said that the sending home of the bodies of the Iraqis scheduled to take place today has been put off until Wednesday.

He added that the convoy carrying the dead bodies will take off from the residence of the Iraqi ambassador in the heart of Amman.

Four Iraqi diplomats who tried to leave Jordan back to Iraq were turned back only hours after the fatal stabbing in Amman. Reuters quoted security officials as saying:

"Four were turned back from the Karameh border after arriving at 06:00 GMT on Sunday," the security official who was not named was quoted as saying.

Jordanian officials at the

Karameh border gateway with Iraq were ordered to detain all Iraqis trying to leave Jordan for questioning and to have them photographed, the officials added. Similar steps were taken to prevent Iraqis from leaving the country from Queen Alia International Airport.

The Associated Press quoted Western diplomats as saying that Ochi ran a company for President Saddam Hussein that handled food imports into Iraq. Ochi apparently was also reported by the agency to be involved in illegal arms imports and owed the Iraqi leadership millions of dollars.

Clinton mulling own plan for Israeli troop withdrawal — press

(Continued from page 1)

detailed plan to break the Middle East peace deadlock centred on a phased Israeli withdrawal from more than 12 per cent of the West Bank.

The newspaper said Mr. Clinton could present the plan to Mr. Netanyahu and Mr. Arafat when he meets the two separately in Washington on Tuesday and Thursday.

The U.S. package would replace an Israeli proposal which offers one additional troop pullback from the West Bank on condition that the Palestinians first meet a long list of demands focusing primarily on their commitment under previous agreements to crack down on militants.

Mr. Netanyahu has said the troop withdrawal would only take place after a delay of several months during which the Palestinians would have to meet Israel's security and other demands.

His cabinet on Sunday

decided not to present Mr. Clinton with any details on how much land it would be willing to turn over to the Palestinians.

Under the Israeli plan, following the one-time troop withdrawal, Israelis and Palestinians would enter directly into negotiations on a final peace agreement setting the borders and status of the Palestinian entity.

Washington and the Palestinians have insisted that Mr. Netanyahu honour a commitment made a year ago to carry out three separate troop withdrawals from the West Bank prior to the conclusion of the final peace negotiations.

According to Haaretz, Mr. Clinton's compromise would require Israel to carry out two further withdrawals, the first of them split into three phases so that Israel can test Palestinian compliance with security obligations.

Under this plan, Israel would immediately grant

the Palestinians civilian authority over four per cent of the West Bank which is now under full Israeli control.

Several weeks later and once the Palestinians had met some of the Israeli conditions, Israel would shift a further four per cent of the West Bank from their full control to the exclusive rule of Palestinian National Authority (PNA).

Israel would carry out a third similar withdrawal after another delay of several weeks, bringing 39 per cent of the West Bank under full or partial Palestinian control.

Finally, Israel would agree to carry out another troop pullback of undetermined scope by mid-year and without linkage to the outcome of final status negotiations, the Haaretz said.

Mr. Netanyahu, who left for Washington early Monday, has refused to carry out more than one additional West Bank pullback and

has indicated that if Washington and the Palestinians insist on more, Israel will simply divide the amount of land it is willing to cede and spread the withdrawal out over stages.

Mr. Netanyahu reiterated Sunday that in any case Israel will not cede any land at this time which "cuts into" areas deemed to be "national security interests."

His cabinet last week adopted a broad list of these interests, said to comprise some 60 per cent of the West Bank.

Mr. Arafat discussed the deadlocked Palestinian-Israeli peace talks with Egyptian President Hosni Mubarak in Cairo on Monday ahead of his visit to Washington, officials said.

The Palestinian chief is expected to leave Cairo on Tuesday for Paris for talks with French President Jacques Chirac, Palestinian officials said. He arrived earlier Monday in Egypt.

Majali welcomes Iraq's pardon of Jordanian prisoners, says Kingdom is yet to be officially informed

(Continued from page 1)

Razaq handed Jordanian officials a list of the names of all Jordanian prisoners in Iraq.

During the meeting "I conveyed to his Majesty, the government and the Jordanian people to release them and he promised to convey this message to the Iraqi leadership," added the premier.

"The Iraqi statement, however, did not reflect the real efforts and contacts in this issue, especially that Jordan had stood and still stands beside the Iraqi people in their plight and has extended all possible support to lift the sanctions," Dr. Majali said.

The premier said that the Kingdom spared no effort to free all Jordan-

ian prisoners in Baghdad especially following the executions of four Jordanians in Iraq on Dec. 8.

Mr. Shbeilat told a press conference in Baghdad on Monday that he expects between 70 to 80 Jordanian prisoners to accompany him back home on Wednesday.

Mr. Shbeilat thanked the Iraqi president for the clemency and dismissed suggestions that President Saddam's decision to free Jordanian prisoners was meant as a snub to the Jordanian leadership.

"Nobody said the King was unable to release the prisoners," Mr. Shbeilat said at the press conference.

"I don't think that it is a strike against anybody. I am sure the [Jordanian] government is happy with what is happening," Agence France Presse

(AFP) quoted Mr. Shbeilat as saying.

The Iraqi clemency, which followed the stabbing to death of six Iraqis in Amman, including Deputy Chief of Mission Hikmat Hajo and his 37-year-old Egyptian wife, was received by scepticism by diplomats in Amman, AFP said.

"Saddam's gesture is a negative message to the Jordanian regime," said one diplomat, who was not named by the agency.

"It seeks to strengthen the Jordanian opposition and recapture the hearts of the Jordanian public who denounced Iraq's executions of four Jordanians in December," added the diplomat.

He was referring to Baghdad's execution of four Jordanians on charges of smuggling car parts out of Iraq, which drew wide criticism from

the Jordanian government which recalled its charge d'affaires in Baghdad and expelled seven Iraqi diplomat from the Kingdom.

"Saddam Hussein, who knows his popularity in Jordan was severely affected by the executions, can hope for a strong return to Jordanian public opinion with his sudden and unexpected gesture of clemency," added the diplomat.

Another diplomat added that President Saddam's move "gives credibility to the opposition in Jordan who were able to achieve in a single meeting with the Iraqi president what the government has failed to achieve in several months of negotiations."

Minorities in Britain vent fury at what's in a name

As societies such as Britain's become more multicultural, problems can arise when the activities of one community — innocently or otherwise — trample on the feelings of another. Such a culture clash has happened in a southern English town, where religion and gambling have collided.

By Murali Krishnan

LUTON, England — The wrath of Islam has descended on a British bingo hall which changed its name to Mecca.

Windows of the building were smashed in December, and in January, a petrol bomb was thrown at its neon sign.

Police believe the acts of vandalism may be linked to the outrage felt within the 15,000-strong Muslim community in Luton, a town north of London, at the local bingo hall's use of the name of their holy city in Saudi Arabia.

"Linking the heart of Islam with gambling and alcohol is blasphemous," said Akbar Dad Khan, the secretary of Luton Islamic Society.

He denied any knowledge of the vandals. "It could have been anyone," he said. But he added: "Our religious sensibilities have been hurt, and there is bound to be anger."

The local Muslim community, largely comprised of people of Pakistani and Kashmiri descent, have demanded that the bingo hall changes its name to something else.

This poses a problem for the owners, the Rank Group, which owns a nationwide chain of Mecca Bingo Clubs. Rank changed the name of its Luton premises from Top Rank to Mecca in December to help consolidate the company image.

If it agrees to drop the name in Luton, it may come under pressure to do likewise with its 134 other bingo halls.

It is not the first time that the feathery of Britain's ethnic minorities have been ruffled in this fashion. Last year, Hindus rallied

against Clarks, a big footwear company, for naming two brands of winter shoes "Vishnu" and "Krishna."

These are the names of Hindu gods, and the choice of name sparked loud protests and picketing of Clarks' shops in the English Midlands.

"To link Hindu gods with shoes is disgusting and unthinkable," said a priest at the big Hindu temple in Neasden, north-west London. "We would not have rested until the brand names were banished."

Keith Vaz, a Labour MP of south

could not have a garbage service called after her."

Transnational firms have also encountered such difficulties. Sportswear giant Nike ran into protests over a line of running shoes whose logo, when viewed from a certain angle, resembled the Arabic for Allah. It recently agreed to a multi-million-dollar redesign.

In Luton, Akbar Khan said of the offending bingo hall: "Mecca, too, can change its name, even if it involves a couple of million pounds. It is, after all, not such a big price to pay."

Mecca Bingo's public relations manager, Debbie Catt, said: "While we have the greatest respect for the views of local residents, the name 'Mecca' was first used in commercial terms in this country more than 100 years ago."

"We also appreciate the concerns about the name's association with bingo, but this has a long-established tradition in the United Kingdom and is a well-recognised brand. The first Mecca Bingo Club was opened in 1961."

However, Akbar Khan has pointed out in talks with the company that there were few Muslims in Britain in the past. The numbers have grown rapidly in recent decades as people have emigrated to the country from former colonies, and the Islamic community has become well-established.

The Islamic Human Rights Commission has protested at the general treatment of Muslims in Britain. "Islamophobia at all levels of British society is now a recognised phenomenon and Muslims are routinely abused," said an official.

At Mecca Bingo, the management has promised measures aimed at assuaging hurt feelings in Luton. However, Muslim leaders have insisted on a name change.

Gemini News

The writer is an Indian freelance journalist who specialises in politics and the conflicts in Sri Lanka and Kashmir. He is currently based in Britain.

All-new 1001 New Items from the Four Corners of the World only at

Alahlia ~ Abela

Superstore

The advertisement features a collection of various food and household products. At the top, there are bags of Homepride Self-Raising Flour and PAXO Golden Bread Crumbs. Below these are boxes of Lou Ana Spicy Cashew Fish Fry and Homepride Muesli. There are also bottles of Heinz Salad Cream and a jar of Shepherd's Pie. Other visible items include a box of Weetabix, a bottle of Alpen, and a box of Special Muesli. The products are arranged in a grid-like fashion, showcasing the wide variety of items available at the superstore.

Alahlia ~ Abela Superstore

Plummeting crude prices prompt OPEC to advance watchdog meeting

ABU DHABI (AFP) — Plummeting crude prices on world markets have prompted the watchdog body of the oil group OPEC to bring forward to next Monday a meeting that was not originally due until March.

The move came as oil ministers from the big Gulf producers held consultations over an Omani request Sunday for an emergency meeting to consider how to react to the falling oil price.

Next week's meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the 11-nation Organisation of Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) could quickly lead to a full ministerial conference, Gulf oil sources said.

"We have to wait for a few days to see if other oil minis-

ters of the organisation will announce their participation in the committee's meeting," one source said.

"Who knows, there could be a surprise in the last minute," he added.

Analysts said the decision to bring forward the meeting reflected OPEC's concern about the situation and the need to take immediate measures.

The committee, grouping OPEC's Secretary General Rihwanu Lukman with the oil ministers of Iran, Kuwait and Nigeria, has no powers to decide on production levels but can recommend measures, including extraordinary OPEC talks.

"The committee holds urgent talks when the market

situation is serious. I think it is going to identify the main reasons for the oil price deterioration and make proposals to OPEC, which will then decide on measures," a source said.

The committee's decision coincided with a call by Oman's oil minister Sunday for an emergency meeting of Gulf oil ministers to discuss the price crisis.

Officials said the ministers of the six-nation Gulf Cooperation Council (GCC), which controls nearly 45 per cent of the world's crude wealth, have started consultations.

"There are no concrete plans to hold that meeting but the ministers are holding consultations to see whether there is a need for the meeting proposed by the Omani minister," said a Gulf oil official, who requested anonymity.

Saudi Arabia and other Gulf oil heavyweights have refused to comment on mounting speculation about a full OPEC emergency meeting but, last week, the United Arab Emirates (UAE) ruled out such plans in a commentary carried by its official news agency WAM.

Oil experts said Saudi Arabia, the world's top crude producer and exporter, and two other GCC OPEC members, Kuwait and the UAE, are opposed to any decision to abandon the recent OPEC output agreement.

"Abandoning that agreement would mean the three countries would have to cut more than one million barrels per day of their production at a time when they are fighting to safeguard their eroding market share and tap their large production capacity surplus," one analyst said.

"If the GCC oil ministers meet, they will stress this point ... I think they are going to send a message to OPEC that the new ceiling must not be touched and output could be trimmed if some members respect their quotas," he added.

Venezuela, Nigeria and Qatar have been blamed for most of the surplus production within OPEC, which already produced close to the new increased output ceiling of 27.5 million barrels per day (bpd) when it was approved by OPEC's ministers in Jakarta in November.

Analysts said calls for a return to the previous ceiling of 25.03 million bpd would mean a big concession from the big

Gulf producers to the quota-busters.

"The Gulf meeting, if it takes place, will not be the magic wand that will end the price crisis," a Gulf oil executive said.

"But at least it shows they want to act to prevent a fresh price collapse that could severely hurt Gulf producers given their heavy reliance on oil exports," he added.

"The ministers will likely call for discipline in the market and cooperation between all producers but will not sacrifice their market share," the oil executive said.

Oil prices have lost more than \$3 over the past few weeks to reach their lowest level in nearly four years.

The plunge was attributed to OPEC's output accord for the first half of 1998 and quota violations, the Asian economic crisis which trimmed demand, healthy crude stockpiles in the West, a mild winter in the northern hemisphere and the return of sanctions-hit Iraq to the market.

A \$3 drop in prices meant the GCC, which also groups Qatar and non-OPEC Oman and Bahrain, lost at least \$40 million a day.

Israel to raise \$3 billion in foreign currency in 1998

AMMAN (J.T.) — Israel is planning to raise \$3 billion in foreign currency during 1998, according to the Israeli finance ministry's accountant general. During the coming year, Israel plans to offer, for the first time, long-term (30-year) bonds on the U.S. capital markets without outside guarantors.

A break down of the \$3 billion: Israel Bonds will raise \$800 million, U.S. loan guarantees \$1.44 billion, Yankee Bonds \$200 million, banking syndicates \$150 million and other sources \$50 million. The remaining \$350 million will be raised by adding to any of the above sources, excluding the Israel Bonds, the accountant general said.

During 1997, Israel fulfilled its aim of penetrating into new markets with successful offerings of Eurobonds, Samurai Bonds (Japan) and Yankee Bonds (United States).

Meanwhile, Israel's inflation rate in 1997 was seven per cent during 1997, according to the Central Bureau of Statistics. During December, the CPI fell by 0.3 per cent, as did the index in November. During the last month of 1997, although the food index (excluding fruits and vegetables) rose by 0.1 per cent, the fruit and vegetables index fell by 2.5 per cent, the apartment index by 0.4 per cent, the furniture index by 0.2 per cent, the clothing and footwear index by 2.6 per cent, and the transportation and communications index by 0.1 per cent. However, the health index rose by 0.4 per cent, and the apartment maintenance index by 0.2 per cent.

HOROSCOPE

FORECAST FOR TUESDAY, JANUARY 20, 1998

By Linda C. Black, Tribune Media Services, Inc.

ARIES: (March 21 to April 19) The next month should be easier. You'll be meeting with associates and planning group activities. Unfortunately, it feels like you're pushed to try something you don't want to do. Don't get into anything until you're ready. A good opportunity could open up later tonight. When the time is right, act.

TAURUS: (April 20 to May 20) You're going to have to work hard this morning, but by this afternoon you should have help. Unfortunately, an older person wants you to do something you are just not interested in. Hopefully, the person who's coming to your aid this afternoon will prove to be a valuable ally. You can use all the help you can get.

GEMINI: (May 21 to June 21) The next four weeks will be better for travel and higher education. Later in the day, you'll notice your workload increasing. It wouldn't be so bad, except you'd rather be running and playing with your sweetheart. Promise yourself a nice reward tonight, by way of motivation.

CANCER: (June 22 to July 21) You have a couple new things to deal with and that may have you slightly rattled. If you are not familiar with computer programmes, this may be the time to go on line. The sun's transit through Aquarius focuses attention on technical matters. Why not get a friend to help? That will make the initial learning phase a lot more fun.

LEO: (July 22 to August 21) You're in a better position to start new projects, but it's not quite time yet. Instead of launching boldly into something new, stop and think about it a while longer. Consider all the possibilities. Listen to the advice of your roommate and best friends. You might as well do this purposefully, because it's going to happen anyway.

VIRGO: (August 22 to September 22) The pace quickens. The focus is on learning, in more ways than one. One of your problems is a short attention span. You tend to move from one thing to another rapidly. You keep notes so that everything is in order. That's your assignment today. Even if you can't do it happily, you should make every attempt to do it.

LIBRA: (September 23 to October 22) The morning is your best time for love, decision-making and action. You'd better hurry, though. Your window of opportunity won't be open for long. You tend to put off making decisions. That's not a good idea. Make them this morning, so you won't have to worry about them later.

SCORPIO: (October 23 to November 21) The emphasis is on your home or domestic matters. That will be the case for the next 30 days, so you might as well get used to it. You're finally able to see exactly what you want. Your roommates may not go along with it quite yet, but at least you're clear about it.

SAGITTARIUS: (November 22 to December 21) The best time for you is this morning. There will be plenty of other people around to help you. Later in the day, you may feel like you're under a little more pressure. You might feel guilty about whatever you haven't done. Do what you're supposed to do before anyone gets a chance to complain.

CAPRICORN: (December 22 to January 20) Your focus is going to be on money for a while. You'll be doing all kinds of things that will bring more money in, and that's kind of neat. Some of these things will be difficult, but that doesn't phase you for a minute. Difficult is your middle name.

AQUARIUS: (January 21 to February 19) You'll feel much more relaxed this morning, and that's wonderful. Don't get too complacent, though. Be prepared for something on older person might ask of you later on today. It won't hurt to have though it out a little bit a head of time.

PISCES: (February 20 to March 20) This morning is not a good time to make decisions. It'll be hard for you to think your way out of a paper bag. For one thing, you won't be able to remember how you got into that paper bag in the first place. At any rate, you'll get much better at everything this afternoon. Don't worry.

Birthstone of January: Garnet — Rose Quartz

Female or Male Trainee for Sales

Qualifications:

- 1) University graduate.
- 2) Good command in English.
- 3) Computer background will be a plus.
- 4) Willing to travel abroad.
- 5) No experience required.

Call: Mr. Khairi/Mr. Jaber Tel. 643827/8.

FOR RENT

Totally furnished apartment with 2 bedrooms.
Location: between Radisson & Hyatt Hotels.

If interested, please call 641515

PERSONAL ASSISTANT/ EXECUTIVE SECRETARY RECRUITMENT


An International Company is seeking qualified Professional Personal Assistant / Executive Secretary with a minimum of five years experience.

Proficiency in English Language and basic computer skills is a must.

Please reply with your Curriculum Vitae including your present salary to:


Personal Manager
P.O.Box 5315
Amman 11183 Jordan

Or fax your C.V. to fax number 646782




SALES ON

MATERNITY AND CHILDREN'S WEAR



WE ARE OPEN AFTER IFTAR



AL-UM

Al-Um Store - Insurance Bldg.
Tel: 658490 Jebel Amman

محلّة التأمين الأردنية - مبنى التأمين
شارع الأمير محمد - هاتف: ٦٥٨٤٩٠

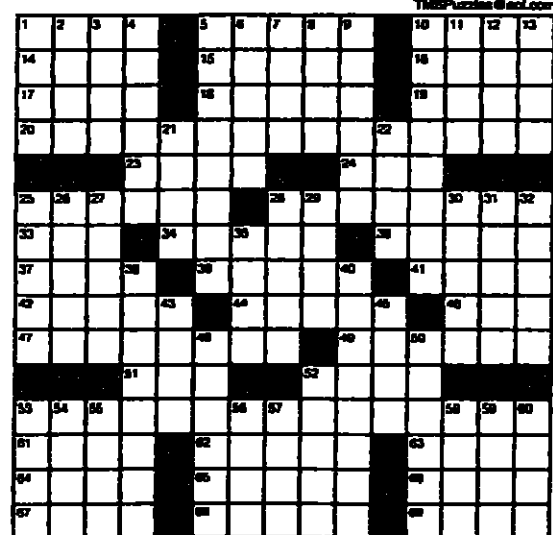
THE Daily Crossword Edited by Wayne Robert Williams

ACROSS

- 1 Boat's spine
- 5 Manufacturer
- 10 Uneven cut
- 14 Verne's captain
- 15 Tolerate
- 16 Vocal inflection
- 17 Stoltz of "Mask"
- 18 "The Prisoner of"
- 19 Russian river
- 20 Swab
- 23 Corn servings
- 24 Casablanca's country: abbr.
- 25 down (gobble up)
- 26 L.A. to N.Y. direction
- 33 Weekday abbr.
- 34 Scandinavian poet
- 36 Well worker
- 37 Ship in the stars
- 39 Three-foot lengths
- 41 Pleasant city in France?
- 42 Artifact
- 43 Fragrant bed
- 45 Soggy ground
- 47 Slettenlike
- 49 Deon and Resnais
- 51 Very dry, as wine
- 52 Grapeful bird
- 53 Sweets
- 61 Jai
- 62 "Taxi" dispatcher
- 63 Gardner and others
- 64 Mark — Baker
- 65 Rectify
- 66 English
- 67 Concludes
- 68 Time charges
- 69 Dates repeatedly

DOWN

- 1 Had the answer
- 2 Younger
- 3 Eastern leader
- 4 Personal storage closet
- 5 "An Unmarried Woman" director
- 6 Encourages in wrongdoing
- 7 "The — and I"
- 8 Icelandic saga
- 9 Gives new guns
- 10 Steam star of the 50s
- 11 South
- 12 Art sch. subj.
- 13 Solidifies
- 21 Clumsy clogs
- 22 Lorne in eight films
- 25 Impertinent
- 26 Kitchen gadget
- 27 — Saxon
- 28 "Crazy Legs" Hirsch
- 29 Tacks on
- 30 Mystery Excuse
- 31 Army looksee briefly
- 32 Bottom of the barrel
- 35 Seniors' grp.
- 38 Foul-weather wear
- 40 Alga
- 43 "Carry on —"
- 45 Chair piece
- 48 Eyelids
- 50 Records
- 52 Pige
- 53 Corduroy ribs
- 54 Ken or Lena
- 55 Ayn, the writer
- 56 Musante's TV series
- 57 Tallow base
- 58 Actress Arden, casually
- 59 Vault
- 60 Macho jets



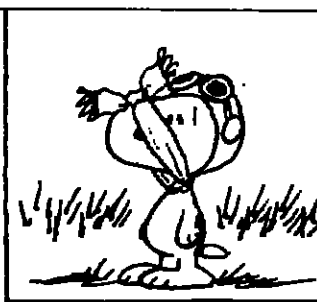
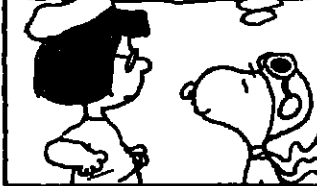
CROP SHRED DEEP
LINE HOUSE OLGA
ADLAIE STEVENSON
DEY NETH ODDEST
OPTS BUGS
AMPULS CARE POD
MIATA ERIE CUBA
BARRYMOOLDWATER
LOSE AAFS AROSE
EWE DIET CLONES
FONT MALL
CHORUS TORO OWN
HUBERTHUMPHREY
AGED AMUSE ICES
ROYLS YODEL TAKE

Peanuts

HAVE I EVER TOLD THE WORLD WAR I FLYING ACE HOW MUCH I ADMIRE HIS BEAUTIFUL SILK SCARF?



PERHAPS THE FLYING ACE MIGHT BE WILLING TO TRADE IT FOR A LITTLE KISS...



Andy Capp

LOVELY TO RUN INTO YOU AFTER ALL THESE YEARS, FLO.



HOW'S THINGS BETWEEN YOU AND ANDY?



IT'S JUST GETTING A LITTLE HARDER TO REMEMBER THAT HE WAS THE MAN WHO MADE ME FORGET TYRONE POWER.



Mutt'n Jeff

I'M MAILING A LETTER I WANT DELIVERED TO MY GIRL IN AN HOUR!



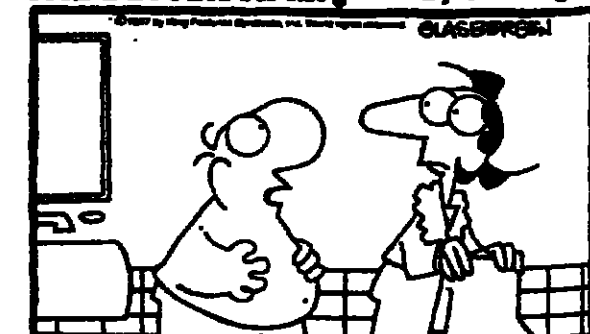
BOY IS HE AN OPTIMIST!



WHAT KIND OF A STAMP DO YOU PUT ON THAT?



THE BETTER HALF. By Glasbergen



"While my father was telling me to make something of myself, my mother was giving me food. That explains a lot."

JUMBLE.

Unscramble these four Jumbles, one letter to each square, to form four ordinary words.

NOMUD

GORAC

CLEFEE

STOFFE

Print answer here: A

OF AN

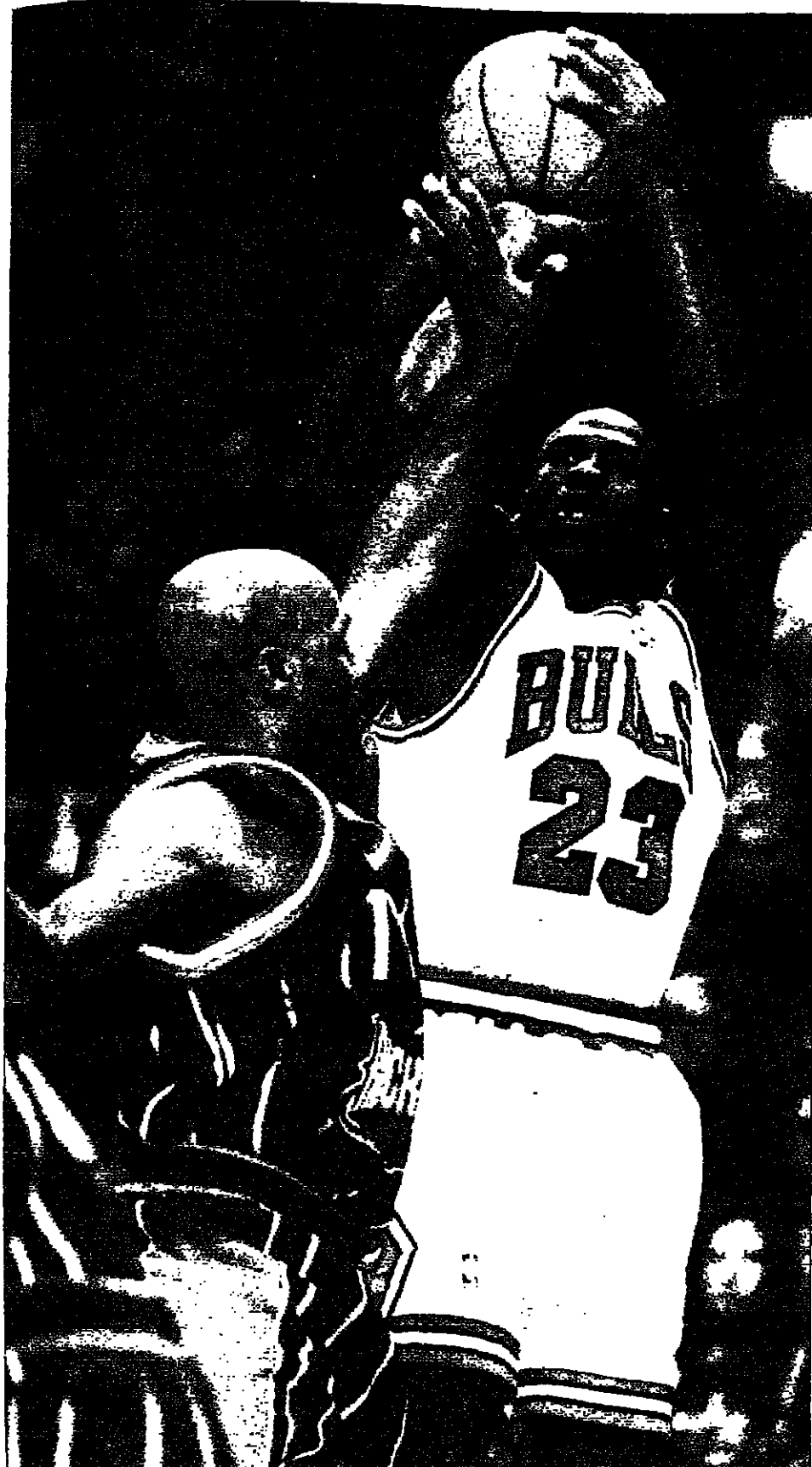
(Answers tomorrow)

Yesterday's Jumbles: EJECT SOAPY CHERUB LEAVEN

Answer: Wearing gaudy sunglasses made her this — A SPECTACLE



Many villas and apartments for rent or sale furnished or unfurnished
Abdoun Real Estate
Tel: 5920805-5920609
Fax: 5932605



Chicago Bulls' guard Michael Jordan shoots in front of Houston Rockets' Rodrick Rhodes in the first quarter of game in Chicago (Reuters photo)

Bulls down Rockets 106-100

BOSTON (AP) — Rik Smits scored 25 points as the Pacers beat the Celtics 103-96 Sunday in Larry Bird's first game in Boston as Indiana's coach.

The Celtics retired Robert Parish's No. 00 at halftime, picking this game so Bird could be present. But Bird, taking the parquet floor for the first time with another team, stole the spotlight from his former teammate.

He received a standing ovation when he came onto the floor before the game, another after he was introduced and another after a reel of his highlights was shown on the scoreboard.

Jalen Rose scored 20 points for Indiana, which won its fifth straight game. Ron Mercer led Boston with 21 points.

Bird played 13 years for the Celtics, won three National Basketball Association titles and had his No. 33 retired by the team on Feb. 4, 1993. But he took over his hometown Pacers last spring even though the Celtics' job was open, saying he didn't want to tarnish his image in Boston with a potentially unpleasant rebuilding effort.

Chicago Bulls 106, Houston Rockets 100: In Chicago, Michael Jordan scored 45 points, including a pair of key 3-pointers in the final quarter, and the Chicago Bulls overcame a spirited performance by Charles Barkley to beat the Houston Rockets.

Barkley, jawing, yapping and exchanging barbs with his good friend Jordan, scored 35 points — 19 over his average — and had 14 rebounds for the Rockets, who have lost 10 of their last 14 games.

The Rockets played without injured stars Hakeem Olajuwon and Clyde Drexler and then lost guard Mario Elie with 6:54 left in the first half when he strained his left shoulder after colliding under the basket with Scottie Pippen.

But every time it looked like the Bulls would run away, Houston fought back with determined play from Barkley, who made 11-of-14 field goal attempts.

San Antonio Spurs 98, Milwaukee Bucks 92: Overtime: In Milwaukee, David Robinson had 30 points and 15 rebounds, and Tim Duncan had 20 points and 11 rebounds as the San Antonio Spurs beat the Milwaukee Bucks in overtime.

The Spurs scored the first eight points in overtime to win their fifth straight and 17th of their last 19. It was San Antonio's first

overtime win of the season after three losses.

The Bucks, who lost the last two games of their homestand after winning the first three, were led by Terrell Brandon with 19 points. Milwaukee's Glenn Robinson, the league's third-leading scorer with a 23-point average, missed the game with the flu.

Phoenix Suns 96, Miami Heat 87: In Phoenix, Antonio McDyess scored 20 points and Jason Kidd just missed a triple-double as the Phoenix Suns beat the Miami Heat.

Kidd had nine points, 13 assists and 10 rebounds, falling one point short of his third triple-double in his last 12 games.

The Suns built a 25-point lead in the first half and then held off the Heat, who lost their third consecutive game for the first time this season.

Jamal Mashburn led Miami with 25 points. Alonzo Mourning had 17 points and was 6-for-6 from the field, but played only 19 minutes before fouling out with 7:08 remaining.

Portland Trail Blazers 94, Denver Nuggets 82: At Portland, Oregon, Gary Trent scored a career-high 27 points as the Portland Trail Blazers handed the Denver Nuggets their 20th straight loss, 94-82 Sunday night.

The Nuggets tied the second-longest, single-season losing streak in NBA history. The Philadelphia 76ers lost 20 straight during 1972-73 and the Dallas Mavericks did the same during 1993-94.

The longest losing streak in one season is 23, by the Vancouver Grizzlies in 1995-1996. The longest overall losing streak is 24, by the Cleveland Cavaliers over two seasons (1981-82 and 1982-83).

The Nuggets led 61-60 before the Blazers scored the last seven points of the third quarter and went on to beat Denver for the ninth straight time. Trent scored five points during the Portland run.

Kenny Anderson scored 23 points for the Blazers, while Arvydas Sabonis had a career-high 20 rebounds and 14 points.

Rookie Bobby Jackson scored a career-high 27 points for Denver, which fell to 2-35 this season. The Nuggets haven't won since beating the Los Angeles Clippers on Dec. 7.

Eric Washington added 17 points for Denver.

Resurgent Everton give Chelsea the blues

LONDON (AFP) — Chelsea lost further ground in the race for the English Premiership title as Everton came from behind to grab a crucial 3-1 win which lifted them clear of the relegation zone on Sunday.

Chelsea, who remain in third place seven points behind leaders Manchester United, took the lead on 37 minutes through Tore Andre Flo before Gary Speed levelled the scores moments later.

Everton stepped up the pressure in the second half and took a deserved lead on 62 minutes when giant Scot Duncan Ferguson rose above the Blues defence to score with a trademark header.

Everton sealed the points seven minutes from time when Chelsea defender Michael Duberry fired into his own net as he tried to clear the ball under pressure from Ferguson.

Everton's second successive victory — they won 3-1 at Crystal Palace last weekend — lifts them four places up the table to 13th and provides further evidence that their season may finally have turned for the better.

Norwegian ace Flo, who Everton tried to buy at the end of last season, put Chelsea in front on 37 minutes after capitalising on confusion in the home defence.

England wing back Graeme Le Saux swung over a cross from left which Everton failed to clear at several attempts before Flo stuck out a boot to stab the ball past his compatriot Tomas Myhre in the Everton goal.

But within two minutes, Everton were level, silencing the 2,000 euphoric Chelsea fans who had made the long trip from west London to Liverpool.

Former England star Nick Barmby chipped a delicate lob from the right of the area to the far post for Speed to poke the ball in from the tightest of angles after Frenchman Mikael Madar had seen his header cleared off the line.

Chelsea were without the injured Dennis Wise and Gianfranco Zola and the suspended Roberto Di Matteo, but had the better of a scrappy first half in which Everton continually gave away possession.

Everton had the chance to take the lead 10 minutes after the break when a sustained assault on the Chelsea goal ended with Eddie Newton throwing himself full length to clear a shot off the line from Madar.

Five minutes later Madar seemed certain to score when he was clean through on goal, only to see his powerful low shot cannon off the legs of Chelsea goalkeeper Ed de Goey.

But from the ensuing corner, the Merseysiders took the lead which their mounting pressure deserved when Ferguson rose to power home an unstoppable header.

Chelsea player-manager Ruud Gullit brought himself as the Londoners poured forward in search of the equaliser, but any hopes of a positive result were dashed when Duberry put the ball into his own net on 84 minutes.

Klinsmann plans to bow out in style

LONDON (AFP) — Tottenham chairman Alan Sugar hopes Jurgen Klinsmann, who has said he plans to retire after the World Cup finals in France, will lead Spurs to Premiership safety before bowing out.

The 33-year-old German striker has said he intends to call it a day after this year's World Cup finals in France and Sugar said: "I'm sure everyone in football would like Jurgen Klinsmann's last season in football to be a memorable one."

Klinsmann, whose first goal of his second spell at White Hart Lane earned Spurs a 1-0 win over West Ham on Saturday, told German radio station ARD of his plans to retire after France 98.

"I will not play in the 2000 European Championships," he vowed. "I will retire."

"He has been an impeccable role model and a professional throughout his career. He came to help us out at Tottenham to the end of this season and we sincerely hope he goes out on a high note. He deserves it."

Klinsmann's first spell with Spurs ended in acrimonious circumstances in 1995 when he exercised a get-out clause in his contract to go to Bayern Munich and then Sampdoria.

Furious Sugar famously criticised Klinsmann and said his number 18 Spurs shirt was not good enough to wash his car with.

But Klinsmann had no hesitation in making an extraordinary return to the Premiership strugglers for a fee of £175,000 in December with a contract until the end of the season.

His spell in Sampdoria had been ruined by an ankle ligament injury and he scored only two goals in eight appearances.

Klinsmann's career highlights include winning the World Cup in Italy in 1990, the European Championship in England in 1996, and the 1996 UEFA Cup with Bayern Munich.



German footballer Jurgen Klinsmann smiles during a news conference. German captain and Tottenham Hotspur striker Jurgen Klinsmann says he will end his international career after this year's World Cup finals (Reuters photo)

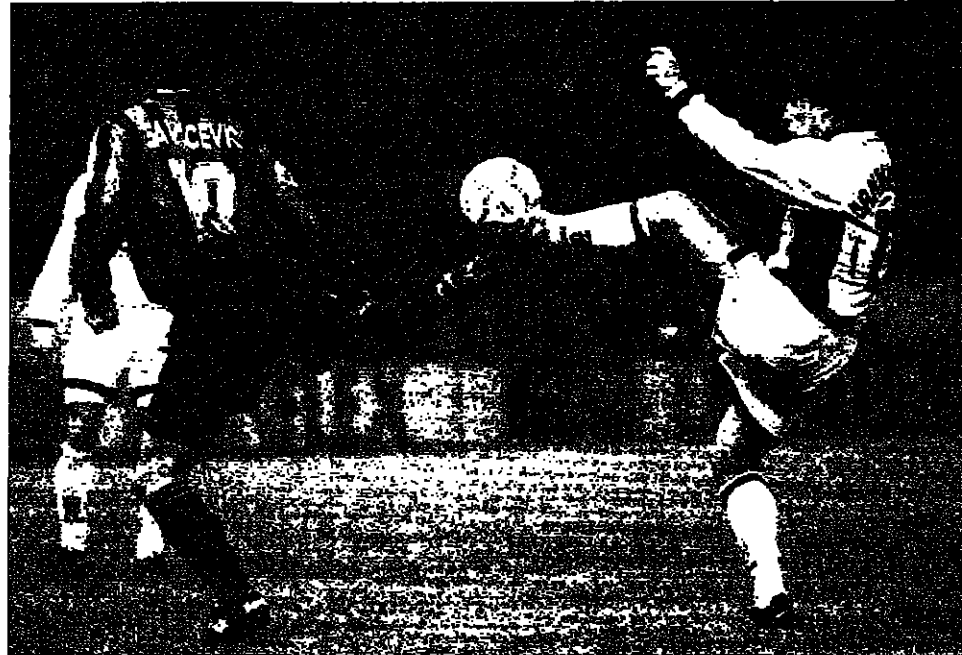
Inter crash to Bari as Parma move up to 4th

PARIS (AFP) — South African Phil Masinga brought Italian league leaders Inter Milan to their knees on Sunday, when he scored lowly Bari's matchwinner in a shock 1-0 victory. And to make matters worse Inter's lead over Juventus at the top of the Serie A was slashed from four points to just one as the reigning champions trounced Bologna 3-1.

French first division giants Strasbourg, reduced to ten men after defender Jean-Luc Dogon was sent off after just 11 minutes, crashed out of the French Cup on Saturday when they were beaten 2-1 by third division minnows Epinal. Other elite clubs Metz and Monaco survived ... but only just. Metz needed a penalty shoot-out to get past second division Le Mans after being held 1-1 and Monaco were severely tested away to the part-timers Dijon before clinching a 2-1 win in extra-time.

Inter's shock defeat came when Masinga, a former Leeds United ace, stabbed home a loose ball after Inter goalkeeper Gianluca Pagliuca parried his header. It was only the second time Inter have been beaten in the league this season.

Inter coach Gigi Simoni admitted: "Obviously we're disappointed. We started well and we could have scored two



AC Milan's striker Dejan Savicevic (L) challenges Parma's Fabio Cannavaro (R) for the ball during early action in their Italian first division soccer match in Parma (Reuters photo)

or three times ... but that's football.

"We're not a team that gets shattered when we lose, like today, and we're not excessively euphoric when we win. We're just going to carry on our way and hope that next Sunday we can redeem ourselves."

Inter have now lost three of their last five games between league and cup, while Ronaldo saw a string of efforts either saved or flash wide.

Juventus, who have the best attack in Italy, wasted no time with Bologna.

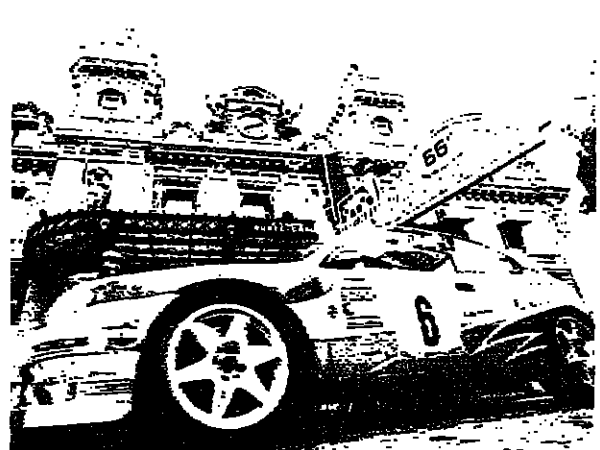
Filippo Inzaghi scored twice from close range in the first 20 minutes and Alessandro Del Piero cracked home a 25-yard free-kick on the hour. Russian Igor Kolyvanov notched Bologna's consolation goal in injury time.

Third-placed Udinese drew 1-1 away to Atalanta while Parma moved up to fourth after scoring two stunning

goals in a 3-1 win over AC Milan in the night match.

There was crowd trouble when Napoli's season of misery continued with a 3-0 home defeat to Brescia — their 12th in 16 league games.

Elsewhere, lowly Piacenza snatched a late equaliser to draw 1-1 with AS Roma at the Olympic stadium, while Vincenzo Montella scored twice in Sampdoria's 3-1 victory over Lecce and Vicenza won 1-0 at Empoli.



France's Didier Auriol in his Toyota at the start of the 66th Monte Carlo Rally in Casino Square. The 114 competitors in the 1458 km classic rally wind through southern France for three days, ending back in Monaco (Reuters photo)

LOST LENS

Canon Wide Angle Lens, Model J9ax5.2B3,
Serial No. 11884, Inventory No. 510778,
all encased in a silver metal case
approximately 35 x 22 x 20 cm.
This Lens is The Property of CBS

If Found Please Contact 856 176,
or Nearest Police Station for reward.

GOREN BRIDGE

WITH OMAR SHARIF
& TAMMAM HIRSH

BAIT THE TRAP WELL

Both vulnerable. North deals.

NORTH
♠ A Q 2
♥ 7 5 3
♦ K Q 2
♣ 7 6 5 2

WEST
♠ J 9 8 4
♥ 9 5 2
♦ A J 7 6
♣ J 9

EAST
♠ 10 7 3
♥ K Q J 7 6
♦ 10 8 3
♣ K 4

SOUTH
♠ K 6 5
♥ A 10 4
♦ 9 5 4
♣ A 10 8 3

The bidding:
NORTH EAST SOUTH WEST
1♠ 1♥ 1NT 1NT
2NT 2NT 3NT 3NT
4NT 4NT 5NT 5NT

Opening lead: Nine of ♣

Great defenders are born, not made. Follow this spectacular effort by former world champion Bob Goldman of Dallas, from an international tournament some years ago.

Given the fact that South's jump to two no trump was invitational, the auction was straightforward. All that remained was for declarer to make nine tricks before the opponents got five.

West led a heart and declarer allowed East's jack to win the first trick, and had to hold off again when East continued with the

queen. After winning the third heart, South's problem was to keep East off lead while developing the club suit.

South was 1980 world champion Christian Mari of Paris, and he made a good shot when he crossed to dummy with the queen of spades and led the queen of clubs. East covered with the king, and Goldman dropped the jack under declarer's ace!

Suddenly, declarer had an opportunity for nine tricks without having to rely on West holding the ace of diamonds. It seemed that, with the marked finesse for the nine of clubs, declarer could score five club tricks, three spades and the ace of hearts without raising a sweat. That was not quite how things worked out.

Declarer crossed to dummy with the ace of spades, led the deuce of clubs and, when East produced the four, confidently finessed the eight. A laydown contract could now no longer be made.

West won the nine of clubs and led another spade, forcing out the king. Now, before declarer could set up the ninth trick in diamonds, Goldman could rise with the ace on the first lead of that suit and cash a high spade for the setting trick. The defenders collected six tricks, and one in each of the other suits for a one-trick set. A stellar performance.

FOR RENT

2 Super Deluxe fully furnished apartments in prime locations with panoramic views. (one in Rabia and the other in Sweifiyh opposite Deir Ghar).

Please contact Tel. : 838758 , 079 / 31234

JORDAN
TIMES
FAX:
696183

Furnished Apartment For Rent

A super deluxe 3 bedroom brand new furnished apartment located in Sweifiyh is available for rent by foreigners.

Contact : Mobile 79903 anytime or 673898 or 702087 after 2:30 p.m.

Egypt's reporters, opposition parties criticise new press law

CAIRO (AP) — The union representing Egyptian journalists on Monday urged President Hosni Mubarak not to sign legislation that would require government permits for new publications.

The Journalists Syndicate — which represents the nation's reporters, editors and photographers — said that the bill would limit freedom of speech.

Opposition parties, which publish a variety of dailies and weeklies, said they will launch a campaign to protest the legislation.

The bill, passed Saturday by the parliament, amends

an existing law that allowed specially formed "media companies" to publish newspapers without a licence. Under the amendment, licences now will be required.

The law must be signed by Mr. Mubarak before it goes into effect.

Information Minister Safwat Al Sherif was quoted by the Al Osboa weekly as saying: "The new law is only procedural and should not be taken as against freedom of the press. The state is keen that freedom of the press should not be infiltrated by parasites and strangers."

At present, only the gov-

ernment, political parties and media companies that are well capitalised can issue periodicals.

To avoid Egypt's registration process, many periodicals publish abroad and only distribute in Egypt.

The journalists argue that anyone should be allowed to publish in Egypt and that no government permit should be required.

A statement issued by the Journalists Syndicate called the legislation "a new shackle on freedom of expression which contradicts the principles of the constitution."

The syndicate represents some 4,000 journalists.

Israel chides EU over statement on Palestinian economy

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israel challenged on Monday a lengthy European Union (EU) report on the troubled Middle East peace process, saying it ignored Israeli efforts to help develop the Palestinian economy.

"It is our impression that there is no appropriate reference [in the EU report] to the efforts that Israel has recently made to improve the Palestinian economy," the Israeli foreign ministry said in a statement.

The ministry was

responding to a 23-page report issued by the European Commission last week which called for a review of EU-Israeli relations if Israel proves unable to achieve "tangible results" in peace negotiations with the Arabs.

The commission notably called for "rapid progress towards eliminating all obstacles to Palestinian economic development" which it said notably included repeated Israeli security closures of the occupied ter-

ritories.

Taking a conciliatory tone, the Israeli foreign ministry said Israel "welcomes the helpful role that Europe has played thus far and the aid that it has given to the Palestinian economy."

"We view the strengthening of the Palestinian economy as an important element in the peace process and accordingly we encourage Europe to continue in its efforts," it said.

Iran raps U.S. for new weapons sale to Israel

TEHRAN (AFP) — Iran on Monday criticised the United States for providing Israel with sophisticated new weapons and urged Muslim countries not to take the issue lightly.

"The strengthening of Israel's military arsenal is dangerous to the Middle East. Islamic countries must not remain indifferent to America's military support for Israel," warned Iranian Foreign Ministry spokesman Mahmoud Mohammadi.

Quoted by Iran's official news agency IRNA, he urged Muslim countries to pressure Israel to accept supervision by the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA).

Israel on Monday took delivery from the United States of its first two F-15 long-range strike aircraft, fighter bombers capable of hitting targets in Iraq or Iran without refuelling.

The two warplanes are the first of 25 F-15s purchased by Israel for \$2.2 billion. The aircraft, manufactured by Boeing, will be the most advanced in Israel's air force, with a range of 4,500 km capable of reaching any target in the Middle East night or day and in any kind of weather.

The F-15, with a cost of \$85 million per aircraft, has a top speed of two-and-a-half times the speed of sound and uses Israeli-developed radar and radar evasion systems.

It can carry 11 tonnes of bombs and missiles. Mr. Mohammadi accused Washington of waging a "baseless propaganda" war on Iranian missile purchases from Russia and China to "distract the region's public opinion for its excessive supply of arms to Israel."

U.S. Defence Secretary William Cohen said his Chinese counterpart had given repeated assurances Monday that Beijing would halt exports of cruise missiles and nuclear technology to Iran. The United States is also working with Israel to prevent Russia from supplying Iran with weapons of mass destruction, according to Israeli officials.

But the Iranian spokesman said the "pillar of the Islamic Republic's foreign policy is to remove tension and free the region from weapons of mass destruction."

Palestinians protest trial of Garaudy

GAZA CITY (AFP) — More than 100 Palestinian writers and journalists demonstrated here Monday to protest at the trial of French author Roger Garaudy charged with denying the Nazi Holocaust against the Jews.

The writers marched through Gaza City to the French Cultural Centre, carrying signs calling Mr. Garaudy's trial "a surrender to Zionist terrorism," witnesses said.

"No one can deny the suffering of the Jews at the hands of the Nazis, but our protest is against the heavy-handed law put before the French courts which bars any questioning of

Zionist stories," a statement by the protesters said.

Mr. Garaudy, 84, is on trial for his book "The Founding Myths of Israeli Politics," which prosecutors claim denies that the Nazis used gas chambers to exterminate Jews during the World War II.

Mr. Garaudy, a former Communist academic who converted to Islam, has become something of a hero to many Arab intellectuals with the publication of his book.

The Paris court is due to hand down a verdict on Feb. 27. Mr. Garaudy faces a possible one year prison term and a \$50,000 fine.

More than 100 Israelis died as a result of Iraqi Scud attacks — report

TEL AVIV (AFP) — More than 100 Israelis died as a result of Iraqi missile attacks on Israel during the 1991 Gulf war, according to a new study published Monday.

According to the official toll from the war, only two Israelis were killed as a direct result of attacks on the Tel Aviv region by Iraqi Scud missiles.

But the study by Jerusalem's Hebrew University attributed 117 other deaths to factors related to the Iraqi attacks.

The majority of deaths were the result of heart attacks or suffocation from misuse of gas masks distributed to the entire population to protect against possible chemical or biological attack, said the study, which was published in the Yediot Aharonot newspaper.

During the Gulf war, Iraq fired 39 Scud missiles on Israel but none had chemical or biological warheads. Most landed in the Tel Aviv region, causing widespread damage and injuring hundreds. A number of the missiles were intercepted by U.S. Patriot anti-missile missiles.

The Hebrew University study said that 33 people, mostly elderly, died on the second night of the war on Jan. 18, 1991.

Israel refrained from retaliating against the Scud attacks at Washington's request in order not to undermine the U.S.-led international coalition built to end Iraq's occupation of Kuwait.

The Turkish-Greek Cypriots to exchange data on missing people Friday

NICOSIA (AFP) — The Turkish Cypriot and Greek Cypriot sides of this divided Mediterranean island are expected to exchange information Friday on missing people from both communities, a U.N. official said on Monday.

Their representatives will meet in the buffer zone dividing the Turkish-held north from the internationally Greek Cypriot republic of Cyprus in the south, said Waldemar Rokoszewski, spokesman for the U.N. peacekeeping force here.

Turkish Cypriots are expected to turn over information on 400 of the 1,619 Greek

Cypriots missing since 1974, when Turkey invaded the northern third of Cyprus in response to a Greek Cypriot coup in Nicosia aimed at uniting the island with Greece.

The Greek-Cypriot representative is to provide information on 200 of the 603 Turkish Cypriots missing since inter-communal strife in 1963.

Nicos Theodosiou, a Greek Cypriot who heads the Committee for the Relatives of the Missing, said the new information is expected to include maps showing the location of possible mass graves.



ON THEIR WAY TO GULF: Harrier jump-jets stand on the flight deck of British aircraft carrier HMS Invincible as it makes her way through the Suez Canal followed by royal fleet auxiliary, Fort Victoria, on their way to the Gulf Sunday as tensions rise between Iraq and U.N. arms inspections (AP photo)

EU mission to Algeria may visit site of recent massacres

ALGIERS (AFP) — A high-ranking EU mission was awaited in Algeria late Monday to discuss the Algerian government's six-year fight against Islamists and — according to one member of the delegation — to maybe visit the site of recent massacres.

The group, composed of European Commission Vice President Manuel Marin and the deputy foreign ministers of Austria, Britain and Luxembourg, was due to arrive in Algiers at 9:30 p.m. local time for the 24-hour visit. British officials said in London.

Algers has repeatedly warned that any attempt by the mission to talk about investigating slaughters over the last three weeks would be regarded as foreign "interference" in its domestic affairs.

Instead, it has defined the visit's agenda on finding ways to dismantle "terrorist networks" in Europe which it says are supplying the Islamists in their fight against the government.

But Mr. Marin said in Madrid that the mission had "finally" received permission from the Algerian government to maybe visit the sites of recent massacres.

The three deputy foreign ministers in the delegation — Derek Fatchett of Britain, Benita Ferrero-Waldner of Austria and Georges Wohlfart of Luxembourg — were selected to go to Algeria with Mr. Marin because their countries are, respectively, the current, future and past post-holders of the rotating EU presidency.

The mission was prompted by European concern over the recent wave of massacres which, according to press

reports, left more than 1,500 people dead since the start of the Holy Month of Ramadan on Dec. 30.

The Algerian government, which officially puts the Ramadan toll at 254, maintains that any discussion of the massacres was unwelcome because it has established that Islamist "terrorists," as they call them, are to blame.

Mr. Marin acknowledged that the EU mission "must tread carefully," but said they were determined to speak to Algerian opposition figures and journalists as well as Foreign Minister Ahmad Attaf and other government ministers.

No announcement has been made of a meeting with Algerian President Liamine Zerroul.

"In principle," Mr. Marin said, the scope for the dialogue was "quite wide."

But Mr. Marin added, the delegation must maintain a "careful and constructive" approach so as not to "delegitimise" the Algerian government.

Meanwhile, France lauded the mission to the former French colony.

"It's a positive element," foreign ministry spokeswoman Anne Gazcau-Secret said. "It's the first step towards a strengthened dialogue between Algeria and the European authorities."

She added that "no subject is ruled out" in the talks. In a radio interview Sunday, Mr. Fatchett said the delegation will be pushing the government on the "need for greater openness."

"That's not pointing the finger at anybody in the Algerian government for responsibility, but it would help their case... If we had a very clear statement

Algerian army behind massacres of civilians — ex-prime minister

WASHINGTON (AFP) — A former Algerian prime minister said Sunday the Algerian army has been organising the massacres of civilians to make them look like the work of Islamists.

Abdul Hamid Brahimi, who resigned 10 years ago, told the CBS television network that the army's role is intended to "demonise the Islamists" and to "punish the population that voted for Islamists in national elections."

But Algerian Prime Minister Ahmed Ouyahia has denied the government is taking revenge on people who voted for Islamist candidates in balloting six years ago, the network said.

Mr. Ouyahia also said the army is trying to stop the killings, but that it is impossible to protect the entire population from the widespread violence.

"We are doing our best... [but] protecting the civilians in all places 24 hours a day — I think you would agree with me [that] an army of one million cannot do it," Mr. Ouyahia said.

and a clear understanding of the cause of these events — who's responsible for them."

He said that while the issue of counter-terrorism measures would be raised, "we're a long, long way" from offering military equipment to Algeria.

Mr. Fatchett's comments drew a retort from official Algerian media Monday. The state-owned Al Moudjahid attacked Britain over its tolerance of Islamic extremists.

Mr. Fatchett "comes from a country where fundamentalists operate with impunity, collect funds to commit terrorist acts and call for crimes," the newspaper said.

The official press agency APS called for the Europeans to stop "their hypocritical game with terrorism."

Some 60,000 people have been killed since the conflict between the Algerian government, backed by the headline military, broke out with the Islamists militants in 1992 over cancelled elections, according

to Western estimates. Persistent reports have pinned some of the responsibility for the killings on the army, which in some cases has failed to send troops to villages under attack.

Europe, alarmed at the killings and at the idea of a possible flood of refugees across the Mediterranean into EU member states, has pressed for some involvement in settling the crisis.

"We want to make the Algerian leadership clearly understand that the crisis in their country appears to us to also be a European problem," Austrian Deputy Foreign Minister Ferrero-Waldner said Sunday before leaving for London, where the EU group was gathering.

Newspaper reports here Monday said suspected Islamists have killed at least eight people and wounded 30 in Algeria since Saturday, while at least two armed insurgents also died.



U.K.'s oldest mum dumped by lover after age discovery

LONDON (AFP) — Britain's oldest mother, 60-year-old Elizabeth Buttle, has been dumped by her lover after he learned exactly how old she was, the News of the World reported. Peter Rawstron, 58, who fathered miracle baby Joe, went back to his wife when he made the shock discovery. Buttle told the paper: "He said it was a multitude of pressures but until this became public he never knew how old I was. I think he thought I was in my early 50s."

Lenin and Stalin to make Bucharest comeback

BUCHAREST (AFP) — Statues of Lenin and Stalin are to make a comeback on the streets of Bucharest, less than 10 years since they were removed after the fall of Nicolae Ceausescu's communist regime. Catalin Chiriac, mayor of the capital's fifth district, said he had decided to re-erect the statues to "reminiscent Romanians of the dark period they lived through under communist rule."

The statues, most of which were several metres high, were taken down immediately after Ceausescu was toppled in December 1989. Original plans to melt them down into bells never materialised, and most remained in empty fields outside the capital.

Oxford withholds degree for Blair

LONDON (AFP) — Oxford University has decided not to award British Prime Minister Tony Blair an honorary degree — for the time being, media reports said. Sensitivity over the issue of college fees is thought to have been the most likely reason. Insiders at the university denied that Blair had been "snubbed".

They said Blair was "bound" to receive a degree eventually, and could even do so later this year. Former Oxford graduates who became prime minister have all received honorary degrees — apart from Lady Thatcher. But insiders said Blair's case had no parallel with the university's refusal more than 10 years ago to honour Thatcher in protest over cuts in higher education.

'Diana Garden' opened in Havana

HAVANA (AFP) — A garden dedicated to Diana, Princess of Wales, opened here in one of the capital's oldest and most beautiful sites overlooking the ocean. The central feature of the "Diana Garden" is a fountain symbolising an island surrounded by flowers and trees. Diana is buried on an island in an ornamental lake at her family estate in Britain. Although Cubans rarely saw the magazines and newspapers covering Diana during her lifetime, her death had a big impact here, with some 1,000 people waiting in line to sign condolence books opened by the British embassy.

Besson turns to history for new film

PARIS (AFP) — French director Luc Besson is turning to history for his next project with a film on Joan of Arc. Besson, whose "Fifth Element" starring Bruce Willis was a huge hit around the world last year, is to start shooting in June, said Patrice Ledoux, head of the Gaumont cinema group producing the English-language film. And he is turning to another "Fifth Element" star, actress Milla Jovovich, to play the role of the French saint and national heroine, who was burned at the stake in 1431.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Primak reshut

Volume 23

Saudi Arabia offers to help so Algeria bloodshed

SAUDI ARABIA (AFP) — Saudi Arabia has offered to help Algeria in its fight against Islamists, a Saudi official said Sunday. The offer came as Algeria's fight against Islamists entered its sixth year.

Rallies for Algerian peace in Europe on Thursday

PARIS (AFP) — Rallies for Algerian peace were held in several European cities on Thursday. The rallies were part of a campaign to raise awareness of the situation in Algeria.

SLA abductees Lebanese employ by UN force

BEIRUT (AFP) — Lebanese employers are employing some of the abductees of the Shia militant group Hezbollah, a UN official said Sunday. The official said the employers were using the abductees as laborers.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla

TEL AVIV (AFP) — Israeli soldiers found the body of a second Hizbollah guerrilla in a skirmish Friday in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon. An Israeli spokesman said the body of the Hizbollah fighter, killed by an Israeli tank in the eastern sector of the occupied territory, was discovered by a soldier on Friday. The body was found in a "security zone" in southern Lebanon, where Israeli soldiers are patrolling. Three Israeli soldiers were lightly wounded in the fighting, the army said.

Israeli find body of second Hizbollah guerrilla